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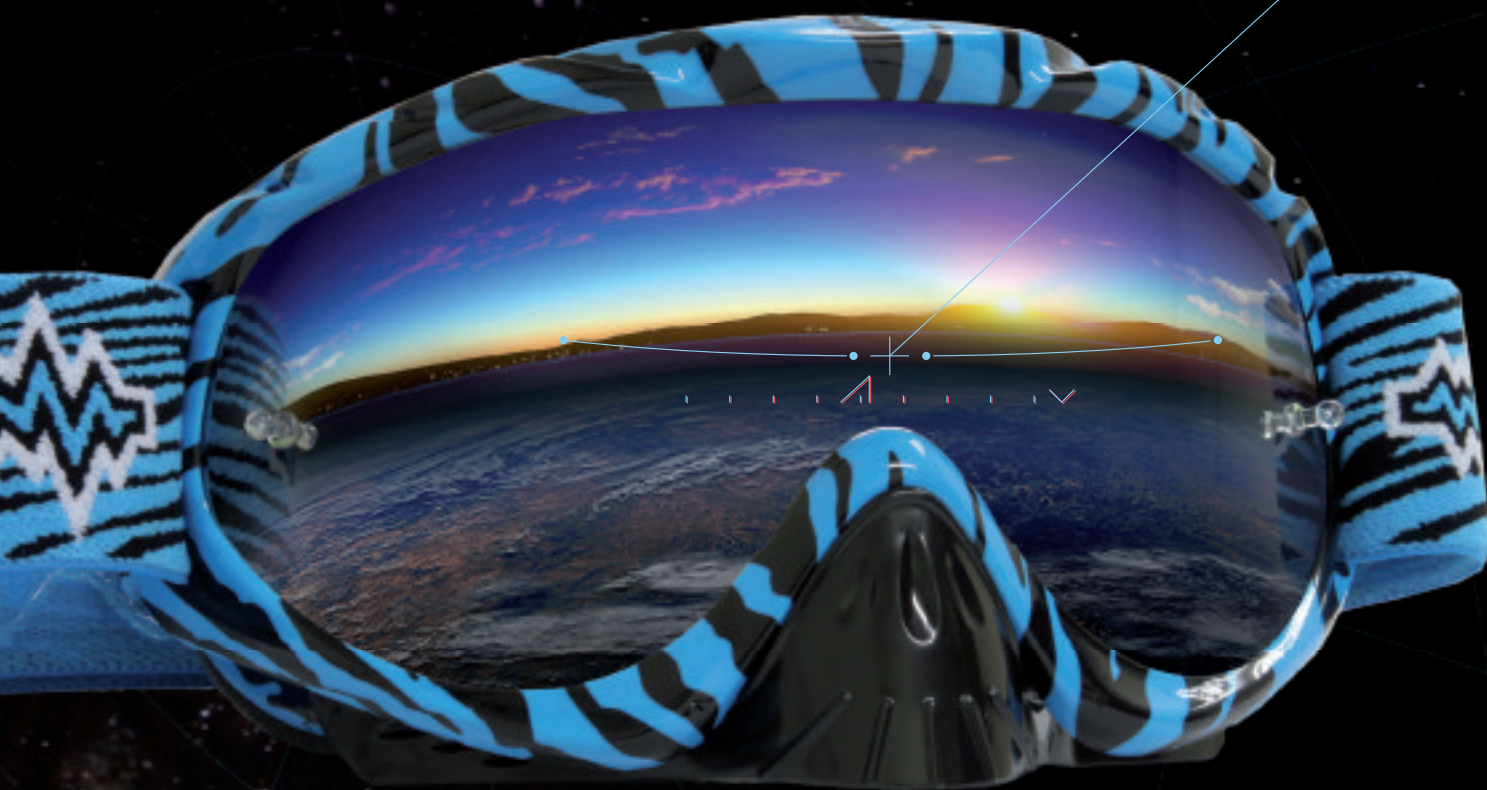
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ON THE COVER:

Zach Osborne whips one out
on a Geico Honda team shoot

© Simon Cudby/Geico Honda

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Ferris has proved to be a
cracking choice for Yamaha

© Ray Archer

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COMMENT

If there's one thing all racers dread it's the thought of spending time on the couch healing up from injury. And while I'm not deluded enough to call myself a racer anymore – it's almost 12 months since I threw my leg over a dirt bike and lined up behind a steel start gate – I still have that racer's mindset of 'must avoid the couch at all costs'. Unfortunately, that's something I've always been crap at and even though I don't partake anymore I'm still paying for all those years that I did.

I have to tell you that this month has been one of the most painful of my entire life. Straight after The Bear and I pawed the finished July issue pages in the direction of our printers I headed up to Kendal hospital and got a total knee replacement on the NHS while he went to sh*t in the woods or do whatever it is that The Bears do when they're not designing magazines.

The end result is that I'm now bionic and underneath the grotesquely swollen and scarred mess that is my new right leg-joint sits an allegedly smooth-running metal and plastic creation where battered bones and cartilage used to be. Yummy!

But getting this thing going again has been reet tough and even now – that's four weeks, 2,352 hours of kid's telly, two chest and one wound infection later – it's still not working reet well and in layman's terms hurts like a bas*ard! I have made some improvements though but that's mostly down to my friendly local physio beating me about the place. She looks like butter wouldn't melt and is oh-so polite but apparently feels the need to bend my unbendy bits until I'm screaming at her to stop while my girlfriend listens to my whimpers and cries from the waiting room – no doubt with a wry grin plastered across her chops. I'm really not too sure who enjoys it all the most although I do know it definitely ain't me...

All of these things together have made getting this issue of the magazine out one hell of a challenge and I've had to break a fair few rules to do it n'all. But fortunately I've got The Bear to help me out and – because I've been watching so much Disney Junior of late I'm gonna use a Jake and the Neverland Pirates analogy here – his 'Yo ho, let's go!' attitude has been most

refreshing. **Thanks dude!**

Something else that's kept me going during these dark times has been the awesome upturn in the excitement and quality of race action available on our TV screens. The last race I visited live and dangerous was the Foxhill Maxxis and since then it's been all about TV and laptop action as I've aimed my eyeballs at a sh*t-load of online, Eurosport 2 and Motors TV coverage to keep me in the loop.

After a decidedly dismal start to the year in Qatar and Thailand – where I could quite happily have stuck needles in my eyes rather than watch any of the GPs on telly – I feel that things are on the up and Ernee, Maggiora and Uddevalla all produced something worth seeing for one reason or another.

That said there's still one grand prix I definitely won't consider watching on TV this summer and that's the British GP which goes off at Matterley Basin near Winchester from **August 22-25**. We're so lucky to have a round of the world championship come to our tiny island and doubly so because Steve Dixon had the smarts to go out and find the right venue to host it and then hire Lord Johnny Douglas-Hamilton to build a banging track into it.

All in all I reckon it's gonna be an ace weekend (made even better if you stay down for the Ken Hall at Langrish on Monday) and I'll be there with my friends no matter what – even if I am still on crutches. Make sure you are too and don't miss out on bagging some discounted tickets by visiting britmxgrandprix.com.

Enjoy this issue and don't forget to tune in next month n'all when we'll have the authoritative British GP preview that'll include plenty of insight from the leading UK racers. Plus we'll have a bunch of other ace stuff including exclusive interviews and terrific tests on the 2014 KX-Fs and Beta enduro bikes.

Oh, and while I'm on the subject of plugs check out our new weekly online video news feature called **The Plug** over at dirtbikerider.com. It's well worth a watch – or even a listen if you're that way inclined so check it out...

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Dowdy celebrates the arrival of a new KX85 at Southwick...



MACPOOPHOUND!

IRN BRY DELIVERS YET ANOTHER MONTHLY DROP OF OFF-ROAD NEWS AND SCANDALOUS GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE WORLD...

After being recently acquired by the KTM factory, Husqvarna have announced that they will be making a return to GP motocross with not one but two factory backed Grand Prix teams in 2014. With the recent demise of Husaberg – which will remain as part of the KTM empire until the end of the year as they make way for Husqvarna to slip right in there – the current MD at Husaberg will move over into a new role as ‘the man’ at Husky.

Between himself and Pit Beirer they’ve appointed Team Ice1 racing (MX1) and Jacky Martens Wilvo Nestaan team (MX2) to carry the candle for their resurgence. So far the only rider to be confirmed to be riding the bike – which is rumoured to be a white and red KTM – is promising up n’ coming talent Romain Febvre from Jacky Martens’ team.

John Dowd started motocross when he was 20 years old and then John Dowd turned pro at 21 years old! John Dowd’s career is too old itself to even be able to race in MX2 GPs – since it’s 27 years to date. John Dowd is 48 years old this year and John Dowd done what many kids would chop their left leg off to achieve and that’s qualify and score points at the last ever Southwick AMA national in June. If that doesn’t go to show that you don’t need to be one of these new era super kids who sets the world alight at 16 or 17 years old to have a successful career then I don’t know what will.

But there’s no harm in trying to be one of them young phenoms and here’s something that may help you on your way – Kawasaki are bringing out an all new KX85 for 2014! It will come as a refreshing change and should be very

well received by 85 pilots as the current model is older than most of the kids that ride it. With a fresh new look to resemble it’s larger siblings, injecting radness back into the Team Green machine, it’s also packing heat in the motor department coming out the box with increased power and with new upgraded suspension to cope with the heavy right wrists that this new ripper is going to encourage. Be sure to keep your eye out for the release date from Kawasaki.

There must be a six month loophole/get-out clause in GP contracts this year as June was like a kid’s party game for some of the GP teams. First of all Michael Leib signed for Buersfoon Suzuki only to be dropped, literally off at the airport by the team on the way to the Italian GP when they fell out. Within a day he had blagged a spot on the Gariboldi team for the weekend but got injured in the early sessions.

Then CLS decided to send home their temp Jimmy Decotis after a sub-par campaign at the GPs of which he was expected to fight for the podium. He was supposed to be in for the rest of the season since joining at round four but was sent packing after only scoring in three motos with a best race of 15th coming in Brazil.

Then there was the highly publicised Simpson and TM split. Simo told me back in the June issue that silly mechanical issues had let them down up to that point but he had hoped for no more. Unfortunately it wasn’t quite that simple and the mechanical gremlins never went away.

After a team meeting to try and resolve the issues, further DNFs followed before ultimately ‘the call’ was made to Simpson from Ricci racing

where they both agreed to mutually end their contract with one and other. SS24 managed to quickly put something together with help from the JK Gebben Yamaha team which he has agreed terms to race for in only Sweden, Latvia and Finland before having to find another path to go down for the remainder of the season.

Ricci racing/TM though were now looking for a replacement MX1 rider at which they begged/borrowed/stole Tanel Leok from MVR-D Route77 Honda. Leok is said to have already signed to complete the rest of this season and for 2014 on the blue and white team unless something else comes along perhaps...

And a very low key change of team came from Harri Kullas. The ex Gariboldi Honda rider decided to leave the Italian Honda team after a ropey first half of the season saying that he had only managed to pull one decent start so far in his campaign this year which leads you to think that he was disappointed with the machinery the team were providing him. He has since moved on to Sahkar KTM which is the Finnish KTM importer.

Talking about privateers there is none more so than Gert Krestinov. At the third round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Culham, Gert attended with only his girlfriend and practice bike in tow. Upon noticing in the pit box that Gert had a 100/19 rear tyre on his 450 (100/19 is a 250F tyre) we asked him what it was all about.

“It’s all I’ve got left,” said Gert. “This is my practice bike because I broke my race bike and don’t know how to fix it. If I need to do any more than change the filter and tighten the chain this weekend then I’m going home.” Gert

went on to get second overall over the weekend like a boss!

There was a lot of humming and hawing over the uncertain whereabouts of Jeffrey Herlings’ future. He openly admitted that it may lay across the Atlantic in the US as the FIM rules stated that a reigning MX2 champion can only defend his title once but it was assumed that he would just move up to MX1 and stay in the World Championship.

Adding fuel to the fire Herlings Tweeted ‘I’m 18, the average European career age is let’s say 30 without big accidents, why race 12 years in MX1?’. A fair point and one that clearly states JH84’s intentions to stay on a 250F. It seems that the FIM heard ‘The Bullet’ pound on his undeveloped chest and changed the rules to keep Jeffrey in the GPs by allowing a champion to defend his title as many times as he wishes as long as he is still eligible under the 23 years of age rule. They also changed the length of motos by five minutes to make them now 30 minutes plus two laps. This is a positive change in my opinion in respect to racers and spectators as the current 35 plus two motos seem to drag on – especially when watching them on TV.

The MX3 world championship has been given the punt now too and is replaced by a new 300cc two-stroke championship. It will be interesting to see how this series takes off as there is definitely a cult two-stroke following throughout the world but I can only wonder about the varied calibre of riders this series will attract with there not being many pros mixing oil with their fuel nowadays. Don’t bag on me for saying this but it might be a pretty awesome amateur series?



"William, for the last time
- get out ma hooose!"



MAC211

STAND IN!

WITH A BREAK IN THE AUSSIE NATIONALS BILLY COMES BACK TO BLIGHTY BEFORE FILLING IN FOR FROSSARD AT THE ITALIAN GP...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Ray Archer

Sorry to anyone who was expecting my column last month – deadline hit right as I was crossing the equator for my mad trip home and to race the Italian GP. I had booked my flights months ago with the anticipation of a six week break that falls in the middle of our motocross championship in Australia. I had no intentions of doing any racing while home and I was literally just gonna have a bit of downtime and catch up with family and friends.

It all started with a phone call from Steve Dixon the Saturday night before round five of the Australian MX Nationals. Michele Rinaldi had asked for Steve's advice in finding a substitute rider for Frossard so things seemed to all fall into place and with me already on a flight that coming Monday it seemed like the most sensible option for all parties.

Before I knew it all the Yamaha bigwigs were conferring and slotting me in to race the Italian GP at Maggiora! There was hope of me racing Ernee but it was all too soon and I had been racing every weekend for the past 10 weeks so a little break along with all the travel was required before Maggiora the coming week.

A quick trip home to Scotland like originally planned was first on the list, catching up and looking after Big Bill who had his first big crash of his career when falling off a ladder. He broke six ribs and four lumbar vertebrae so he was in a bit of a mess and I needed to see him. When sh*t like that goes on and you're half way around the planet it gets a bit scary. He's okay though and even ended up dragging himself to the Italian GP only four weeks after the accident!

I managed to convince my long time pal Johnny Hamilton to tag along with me while we headed to Italy early to start testing and get some riding in before the GP. He didn't take much convincing when he heard we were visiting the Rinaldi factory and racing the historic Maggiora track. Johnny is a mad MX fan but was a bit gutted when Michele didn't let him into the factory with his camera!

The whole experience and working directly with the Rinaldi Yamaha team was really awesome – everyone was super relaxed and testing was easy with lots of tracks close by. The bike was quite different to what I ride in Australia and there were a few different parts that I had to get used to and although I could have used same set-up from CDR Yamaha I was quite interested in trying Rinaldi's engine. I had two

really good days testing with the team and felt strong on the bike heading to the weekend – I was excited but a little nervous to be back at the GPs again.

The GPs seemed to have grown in volume and by that I don't mean numbers but noise! It seems we have really moved away from the essence of the sport and when the only noise pollution was the roar of bikes going up the start straight. Now it's full of cheesy euro dance music getting blasted out of festival speakers at maximum distorted volume and dub step music infecting the pits from the energy drink monuments that are built around the track. It was a bit disappointing to be honest, I obviously didn't have a camper at the track and being pitted in the race pits next to the pit lane and under a 12 speaker stack hanging from a crane wasn't an ideal atmosphere.

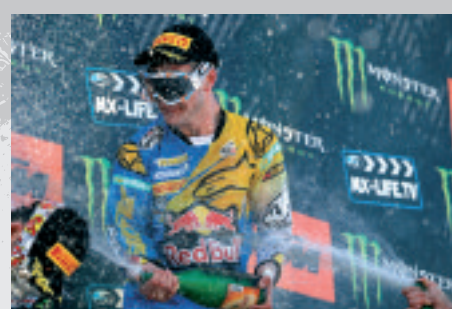
I have a long list of dislikes from my GP experience but I'll focus on the positives. It was a great feeling to be welcomed back by so many friendly faces and it was great to see and chat to some of my old rivals and race a historic track like Maggiora. To race with and experience Rinaldi Yamaha was something I had aimed for as a young pup when I used to look up to and study Stefan Everts when he was at his peak. Another positive was that I had my old crew back with me when I was winning GPs – my northern crew along with my dad which meant it felt like old times and I had flashbacks to my first win at Bellpuig in 2005.

Altogether the Italian GP experience was full on and one I had wish I could have been a little more organised for. The GPs are a freight train of momentum and trying to slot in mid-season was always gonna be difficult. I had to keep in mind my real goal of contending for the Australian MX championship and not repeating any incidents like Matterley Basin!

I was thankful to have the opportunity to race and ride at a high level on what was supposed to be a mid-season break. It gave me that extra bike time and taught me a few old lessons that I had forgotten since leaving the GP circuit so to take the experience back with me and try and up my game a little for the Aussie nationals is one I'm excited about.

It was fun seeing everyone again and who knows, it could happen again!

BD1211



HERLINGS HAT-TRICK?

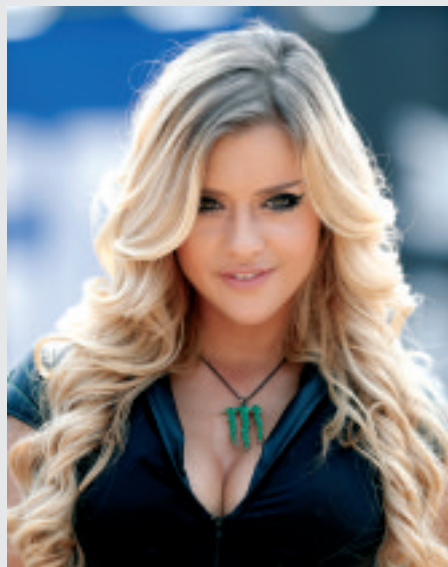
JEFFREY GETS THE ALL-CLEAR TO CHASE THIRD MX2 TITLE...

Jeffrey Herlings can go for a hat-trick of MX2 world titles with KTM in 2014 and is now confirmed to stay with the Austrian firm in 2015 n'all when he'll most likely move to the MXGP class. The Dutch teenager – already under contract until the end of next year – signed a new rolling deal as soon as Youthstream and the FIM confirmed that they had abandoned the MX2-title defence restriction clause.

After agreeing the new deal KTM's Pit Beirer said – "Jeffrey is the youngest rider in his class. He is still only 18 and we've never experienced such a great talent in someone so young. Such a talent needs special nurturing and we're confident that in the hands of Stefan Everts and with the support of the entire KTM team we can guide him carefully through these early years of his already remarkable career. This is also the reason that Stefan strongly recommends that Jeffrey should compete for another season in the MX2 class.

Herlings insisted in Uddevalla that his options for 2015 are open. "I will now definitely stay in the GPs and forget the American dream but there is no decision yet on which class I will ride in 2015 – and we have time. I think a lot depends on Tony – if he is still winning then perhaps KTM will want me to stay MX2 for another year."

Mattighofen sources remained officially tight-lipped on more details but off the record it was admitted that the expectation was that the Dutch teenager would move to MX1 in 2015. With Claudio De Carli? "Jeffrey is happy in the half of the tent where he is at present and there is time to find a solution... particularly if Ken De Dycker continues to make such a good job as number two to Tony Cairoli."



MONSTERS INC! POINTLESS GIRL PIC OF THE MONTH

Some 'motocross' magazines like nothing better than to fill some space with a pointless picture of a pit chick doing nothing but her job. And apparently we're no different here at DBR Towers – our bad! Still, it could be worse as we could have put in a picture of Jake Nicholls' butt boils instead. You can thank us later...

Brytlan Bradnoir powers the Kamanda SX-F towards Culham's first turn...



CONNECT FOUR!

THERE'S BAR-TO-BAR-TO-BAR-TO-BAR RACE ACTION AT CULHAM AS THE PRO NATS HIT TOWN...

Already on a roll this summer, MBO Yamaha's Kristian Whatley adds more money to the mattress, some more silverware to the mantelpiece and an even broader smile across Roy Emberson's boat race by taking all three wins at the third round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals to extend his already healthy series lead.

Whatley's joined on the podium by super privateer Gert Krestinov who steers his Apico Ansatech Kawasaki to the runner-up spot courtesy of a 4-4-2 scorecard as he edges out fast Frenchmen Nico Aubin and Milko Potisek in a three way tie for second.

Aubin's 5-2-3 trumps Milko's 2-3-5 and that's pretty much that.

In MX2 it's more of a mixed bag as Martin Barr takes the overall honours with a 3-2-1 scorecard edging out Neville Bradshaw's 3-1-4 and Steven Lenoir's 5-3-2. In case you're wondering who won t'other moto that'd be our very own columnist Irm Bry MacKenzie who roared to victory in the third and final moto – good work Bry!

In the series standings Lenoir hangs on to the red plate although Bradshaw takes five out of his lead and now sits just 15 in arrears. With the mixed capacity – albeit scored separately –

motos big points can be easily won or lost so there's plenty to play for with four rounds still remaining. The next of those is at Skelder Bank in Whitby on July 20/21 which has already been a happy hunting ground for Nevsta this year.

Can the South African Putoline Honda star use his momentum to take advantage? Will Lenoir find the fast way around the North Yorkshire circuit? Can Graeme Irwin bounce back from a disappointing Culham round? Will anyone stop Whatley? Tune in next month and we'll let you know...



SERIES STANDINGS

| MX1 | | |
|-----|------------------|-----|
| 1 | Kristian Whatley | 204 |
| 2 | Milko Potisek | 172 |
| 3 | Nico Aubin | 166 |
| 4 | Gert Krestinov | 147 |
| 5 | Brad Anderson | 133 |
| MX2 | | |
| 1 | Steven Lenoir | 200 |
| 2 | Neville Bradshaw | 185 |
| 3 | Graeme Irwin | 162 |
| 4 | Bryan MacKenzie | 140 |
| 5 | Lewis Tombs | 118 |

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

ZACH OSBORNE'S ALIAS RACE KIT

We've already identified Zach Osborne as being a bit of a badass on a dirt bike and to show our appreciation of his mad skills we've stuck him on the cover this month. Our bessie mate Philip Coulter over at Alias MX was so emotional about the whole deal that he's hooked us up a set of Zach's kit to give away to one lucky reader. We'll also chuck in a signed print of this month's cover that you can stick on your wall and treasure forever.

To be in with a chance of getting in Zach's pants, and his

jersey too – all you have to do is answer this achingly easy question over at dirtbikerider.com. Visit our space on the world wide web, follow the competitions link to dirtZone and then answer the question. It's as easy as falling off a log. The first correct answer randomly drawn after the closing date of **August 9** will win the swag. Simplex.

So what we want to know is this. What is Zach Osborne's chosen career race number?

Is it: A: 338
B: 118
C: 58
D: Garden gate





YAKETY YAK

C'EST CHEESE!

JAKE HEADS TO THE MOUNTAINS TO RIDE, TRAIN AND ENJOY THE GREAT TASTE OF GUIDETTY FAMILY FROMAGE...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Alex Hodgkinson

Hello to you all from sunny Suffolk. I hope all is well. It feels about 10 years since I last wrote my column and it's been pretty hard to cram it in this week as it's been a bit of a weird one.

I'm writing this between the Swedish GP and the Latvian GP and being based from Belgium we are flying back and forth via there but my Nan's partner sadly passed away a couple weeks ago so we had to shoot back here for his funeral on Tuesday. Not ideal obviously as it meant all day Monday was travelling, first back to Belgium then driving back here but these things need to be done and I wouldn't have ever missed it, especially for my Nan.

My cousin who's in the military and I shared a poem near the end of the service. That was really difficult to keep myself together but I managed it and the service itself was real good. On a brighter note it's always nice to catch up with your family and relatives that you don't get to see very often – it seems you only see them at weddings or funerals.

The French GP in Ernee I'm still not totally sure whether I completely like that track or not really, it's quite fun but not great to race around. I struggled with bike set up all weekend and got it to work a bit better for the last race which I led for 8 laps and finished fifth in after stalling near the end. But I still wasn't happy with the bike.

Anyway we stayed at the track Sunday night and my parents were with us too then I contacted Serge Guidetty – the rider manager from Shot race gear and pretty much the first freestyler in Europe – to ask him about some tracks as I knew he lived in the south of France (where the naked ladies dance).

We left on our way down there as it was about 400 miles. Serge gave us an address to head for and little did I know he was gonna park us up at his house on the top of a small mountain where we were that high we could see Mont Blanc some 130 miles away. As you can imagine it was interesting getting the campers up there and with my dad following in his camper we had to drive pretty slow as the old boy is afraid of a number of things including heights and sketchy windy roads. Haha.

We got there in the end though and Serge hustled us into his house for lunch, then took us further up the mountain to his family farm where his brother produces cheese (errrrr hahahaha) and it was some pretty good cheese too but we gave it all to Dad otherwise I'd be struggling to get a good start at the weekend.

After lunch he said we were gonna go riding so I loaded my bike in his little van and he drove us to a track next to Geneva in Switzerland. It was a cool little club track, pretty strange turning up there and everyone shaking hands with each other and chatting for a bit – I can't really imagine that happening over here.

Mum and Dad went to stay in Annecy while we stayed with Serge as they wanted to stay at a nice campsite. Next day I went cycling early in the morning

but I had forgotten my hand pump so I borrowed one off Serge. Sure enough after 15km my tyre burst on a downhill. I didn't crash luckily but the tyre looked sorry for itself. I tried to fix it but when I went to pump it up I realised the pump he gave me didn't fit. So I'm in the middle of nowhere – proper fuc*ed.

In the end I threw the bike in the back of some farmers pick up and he took us to this knackered old farm where they pumped it up with a compressor after talking to his buddies for 10 minutes. I got back on the road but the tyre couldn't handle it and after 3km in the direction of home she went again so I rode back up and down steep hills until I got back to the camper.

Then the next challenge of the day came from trying to keep up with Serge in his little van on small French roads while I'm in a huge camper! He was in a rush to take me to this track as he had to do a training school at another track that afternoon but it was worth the wild drive there.

Once he beggared off I got out and had a good look about. It was a seriously cool track with pretty big jumps and one jump up a hill with a concrete face to the hill. It was hard to get up if you weren't committed but if hit wide open you could jump all the way over.

That night after riding we drove to Annecy and met up with mum and dad. The next evening we set off for Italy which was only four hours away. The GP there went pretty well for me, mainly due to finding out that in France and the first session in Italy that Jacky had put in a rear shock that I hadn't tried before and that I didn't like. It took for me to break my front brake in practice and to get on the spare bike to realise. I was annoyed but Jacky said he had asked me about it.

Needless to say I felt way better all weekend and had a good one – other than the last race where I got a good start and dropped back to eighth in one lap. I felt half asleep the whole race and was confused as to why afterwards. After we drove to Chamonix for a couple days to see some friends I didn't recover all week and I felt a bit crap. We left for Belgium on the Wednesday and sure enough when we got home on Thursday I had seven boils on my buttocks. It quickly turned bad and I was in a lot of pain and feeling very second hand as it is a blood virus too.

After some blood tests and a week of antibiotics we were in Sweden at the weekend. I managed to ride midweek before to make sure I wasn't too rusty. My backside had cleared up a bit after the pills but was still sore and I felt a bit crap still. But Sunday went well and I only just missed the podium.

I saw a skin specialist yesterday and he's put me on a half dose of antibiotics for a month. I was pretty pissed off with that but my skin condition is quite serious. When the boils come it's so painful and I have no strength so hopefully this gets rid of it. Thanks for reading.

Go hard #45



SIMPSON'S SWITCH!

AFTER SPLITTING WITH TM WOODY FINDS A NEW RIDE...

Shaun Simpson raced at Uddevalla for JK Gebben SKS Yamaha having quickly arranged a deal to ride for the Italian-Dutch team after splitting with TM on the previous Monday.

On arrival to Sweden on Friday the Scot said – "On Monday I didn't even know if we would be here after TM asked me to leave but Yamaha, the JK Gebben team and Riccardo have been great. I rode the bike before I left to come here and I'm looking forward to the rest of the season."

Shaun had the last laugh though with a fourth on his new ride in quali before beating his old ride twice in the points-payers.



ROBBED!

TM TWOC TANEL...

TM have stolen Tanel Leok from MVR-D. The Estonian turned up at the YS press conference as special guest with his Route77 bottle on the table. "I am very happy to ride with TM – they are good people and I like it when I had the chance to go back there again. My other team were also good people but financially they were not so secure. I feel bad for them but they will have a difficult time to finish the season."

MVR-D principal Mark Chamberlain was not surprisingly impressed by the comments from his ex. "We were okay to pay for him to go to Qatar, Thailand and Brazil though!"

And Leok didn't mention the six and a half grand Route77 boss Roland Sakauskas dished out for his recent collarbone operation...

URINE FINE!

MX2 STARS TOLD TO PAY UP OR P*SS OFF...

Four MX2 riders – Elliott Banks-Browne, Romain Febvre, Jose Butron and Jordi Tixier – were all fined 500 Euros each for failing to use the toilets in the waiting zone when they needed to pass water after the sighting lap at Maggiora. Their plea for leniency, as only three cubicles are provided for 30 riders in less than five minutes was rejected on Friday in Uddevalla and they were told that they would not be allowed to start the Swedish GP if the fine was not paid. Dean Ferris got off the charge when his manager Glen Dempsey swore that he had seen him use the Urinal. Bit suspect that evidence if you ask us as it must have been very tight for space in there!



Paulin gets ready to be pounced on by T-bone Tony

MOTOCHEF!

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
COOK-OFF CREATES
ALL-NEW LEVELS OF
EXCITEMENT – NOT!**

The latest lamentable YS Media Event in Italy featured Tony Cairoli, Gautier Paulin and Evgeny Bobryshev in a MotoChef competition where each of them went into the kitchen of a local restaurant to prepare starters for the menu. Our suggestion for Matterley Basin? How about Tommy, Jeffrey and Desalle in a pie-eating contest. In that case our money would be on the MX Panda.

JC'S RETURN!

**KIWI ACE READY FOR
DES NATIONS...**

Josh Coppins will be back in Europe for the Nations in September but this time as Kiwi team manager. "We will be using the boys who are racing in Australia," says Josh. "Unfortunately Scotty Columb will not be available as he has just had an ACL operation and we will go with Cody Cooper (MX1), Kayne Lamont (MX2) and Rhys Carter (Open). I think we have a good chance of top 10." Josh will be able to tell his boys the best way round Teutschenthal as it's where he scored the last two moto GP win of his illustrious career in 2008!



BISTO KIDS!

**KTM'S GP GRAVY TRAIN KEEPS ON ROLLING ON EVEN THOUGH
HERLINGS DROPS ANOTHER MOTO AND TC#222 GETS HIS ASS
KICKED BY GAUTIER PAULIN ON HOME TURF AT MAGGIORA...**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Having revised his 2014 target to a perfect season of overall GP victories after losing his maximum score in the ludicrous Brazilian Super Final Jeffrey Herlings continues to give Stefan Everts and his KTM pit #crew kittens although it's usually on Saturday!

The Dutch teenager has got more lives than a cat. His get-off while leading the qualifying race at Ernee would have been 'season over' for anybody else – "Yeah, you see when the front wheel hit me in the face?" – but Jeffrey gave the perfect answer to his doubters as, having hobbled round on crutches in the morning he shot across the pack from the outside gate in turn one to nail Butron on the opening lap and control Ferrandis for 40 minutes. "Stefan said I could do it on painkillers and adrenalin so I just did what I had to – gassing it whenever he came close."

It took a little longer in race two as he had to move past Dean Ferris, Jordi Tixier, Ferrandis and Jake Nicholls before another 50 points was secured in the bag. One week later at Maggiora the entire world was stunned as the champ needed 22 minutes to pass Sascha Tonkov in quali!

The Russian has been advancing as the season progresses but this was a mega leap – and on a CR250F. Okay, the engine is US-spec and with Bader 'Rabbit' Manneh whispering in his ear all season long if it was gonna happen

anywhere then definitely at Maggiora. "He's training properly now," admitted the Israeli-born American with domestic roots in Italy and business connections in Russia as co-owner of Esta. "I told him to defend the inside line, and he did it well." One bobbie was enough for Herlings to finally get alongside and then he binned it at the next turn!

Bidding his time on Sunday, Herlings notched up yet another double on race day as Tonkov felt the hand on collar of officialdom, his desperate last turn assault on Butron losing him his apparent third place. "Rider and bike have to be in contact with each other when they cross the line," explained an FIM official.

Herlings was in complete control of quali in Sweden but on race day he finally lost an MX2 moto. "All my own fault," said Jeffrey of his first turn crash. "The surface was slick and I lost the front wheel." Having snatched third from team-mate Tixier halfway round the final lap Jeffrey needed someone to ride shotgun and keep Charlier out of second in race two and Tixi dutifully obliged. "Jordi saved my ass today," said Herlings later.

June was a month to forget for Max Anstie but Mel Pocock proved he is now a full-time top 10 GP runner as he showed maturity in the wake of a nasty ankle injury at Ernee. And Jake Nicholls is finally getting a break from DNFs. The East Anglian led in France, took his fourth moto podium of the year in Italy and shrugged off an iron deficiency in

Sweden to chase Charlier all the way for the title. Series top five is now in sight!

Tony Cairoli continues to move relentlessly clear in the MX1 points but Gautier Paulin has got him rattled!

The elegant Frenchman pulled off phenomenal passes on both Van Horebeek and TC on home turf to win race one and the first signs of an end to the truce was there as Cairoli publicly claimed the rear wheel love tap was a "mistake" – LOL!

The French GP still belonged to Cairoli as Max Nagl went straight on at turn one of race two to plant the Frenchie in the ditch but a week later came the revenge.

Neither of them could match Desalle in the opening moto but the Belgian was not in the hunt even before his electric fizzes out in race two. Paulin surged to the front and was gone before Cairoli went on a charge.

Two laps to go and they were locked together. The intelligent Frenchman switched to defend lines and braced himself for the impact from the Cairoli T-bone which was most definitely not a mistake. The Italian bounced off, the Frenchman put down the hammer and the race was decided.

A year ago Cairoli lost the red plate with a zero score at Uddevalla but this year he went 1-1 while Paulin uncharacteristically twice hit the deck. But the Frenchman still made fastest lap and is now indisputably number one challenger.

Tommy Searle's bugbear is his starts. "I even tried starting in first gear but I just can't get out of the gate." The fit Brit is the man on the move at the end of race two no matter where – third from nowhere in France, a pain-wracked fifth after a Saturday get-off in Italy and three seconds from the win in Sweden.

His reward was scant in Uddevalla though as the FIM docked Tommy 10 places for "ignoring a yellow flag". Tommy was insistent that "The flagman was on the wrong side of the track and you couldn't see it until it was too late to react. I wasn't the only one who jumped – just the only one who got penalised! And if I hadn't jumped I would have landed straight on top of the rider on the ground!"

A valid defence? No chance! FIM officials are about as understanding as magistrates. Nuff said...

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|
| 1 | Tony Cairoli | 467 |
| 2 | Gautier Paulin | 398 |
| 3 | Clement Desalle | 374 |
| 4 | Ken de Dycker | 359 |
| 5 | Kevin Strijbos | 298 |

MX2

| | | |
|---|---------------------|-----|
| 1 | Jeffrey Herlings | 492 |
| 2 | Jordi Tixier | 363 |
| 3 | Jose Butron | 311 |
| 4 | Christophe Charlier | 306 |
| 5 | Glenn Coldenhoff | 282 |

Despite an off day at Desertmartin EBB carries the red plate into the remainder of the season

HOT N' COLD!

THE MAXXIS MOVES THROUGH FOXHILL AND DESERTMARTIN WHERE THE CONDITIONS ARE CHANGEABLE TO SAY THE LEAST...

Words by Stefan Paetow

June's supposed to be about sunshine, beer, BBQs and the summer break. What we got though was first a spot of howling wind and driving rain. Sounds almost like much of the early part of the season, doesn't it?

Foxhill and Desertmartin both have been a staple of the Maxxis circuit for years so it's no wonder that several GP riders came over to Foxhill for a spot of fun. Rumour also had it that one domestic rider was told he wouldn't be riding so his GP colleague could. But there we are... the Maxxis paddock is almost as bad as Coronation Street when it comes to rumours...

So, Foxhill then. Turns out that Foxhill is a round of firsts. Monster Energy Yamaha's Dean Ferris goes and shows the locals what's what in the MX2 super-pole and although in the first race he gives championship leader EBB a good run for his money he messes up his second race with two crashes and a shockingly bad finish. The Super Final (oh how we all love to hate this race) sees him finish as the first MX2 bike over the line though.

HM Plant KTM UK's Clarkey and

EBB also put some great races together but it's our lovable rogue (steady on there Stefan - Sutt) on the Putoline Honda, new daddy Neville Bradshaw, who gets to go home with the fancy top trophy while Pendrich Kawasaki's Scottish throttle twister Bryan MacKenzie takes home second.

In the MX1 class, Buildbase Honda's Nico Aubin puts in a good effort but it's Team STR KTM who gets to stun everyone with their young gun with the wild hair. Matiss Karro has a huge following and it shows because the Latvian maroon-white flag is all over the place. The roar when it's announced he's second overall at the end of the day is awesome!

Series leader - Route77energy Honda's Estonian Express Tanel Leok - breaks his collarbone halfway around lap one of moto one and has to make do with the championship runner-up position. Taking over the top spot in the championship chase is MBO Sport Yamaha's Kristian Whatley. Two wins and a fourth are enough to put him on the top step for the day too while Karro's team-mate Jonathan Barragan is third. Nice job, kiddo!

A week or three later, the whole

circus decamps to Ireland. Several big teams show up with virtually nothing (a van or two) while others still put out their best. When it comes to Desertmartin, the Irish boys are usually fired up to perform in front of their home crowd but with February weather having returned, the crowd is not quite as big as expected. It goes to show though that those hardcore fans who have shown up, shout all the harder. Although Graeme Irwin gets the best time in for the MX2, MacKenzie does it one better in the super-pole.

The rest of the day is all about MacKenzie, Bradshaw and Martin Barr. Irwin puts in a commendable effort and draws first blood with a win but the other three are just too consistent. Both Barr and Mackenzie end with a race win each while Bradshaw hovers around the top three. MacKenzie's mechanic BC is practically in tears as Irwin crosses the line for his first Maxxis overall win. See, that's passion, that's what the unsung heroes, the mechanics, live for.

In the MX1 class, it's Whatley who takes pole, buoyed by the win at the previous round and some good racing at Hawkstone the weekend before. As much as he flies in the muddy

conditions the boo-boos in races one and two cost him too many points and he has to make do with third.

Karro is back in his element, and surprisingly, so is Leok. The former simply dominates and takes home a very fancy piece of silver for the win. The latter, after a nice construction job by the folks at the St John and St Elizabeth toughs it out and flies to a second overall with a second and two thirds. The question is why he bothers as he soon sacks off the MVR-D team - and we're assuming all interest in the British title - and turns up in Sweden racing a TM instead...

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----|
| 1 | Kristian Whatley | 278 |
| 2 | Jon Barragan | 250 |
| 3 | Tanel Leok | 236 |
| 4 | Nico Aubin | 212 |
| 5 | Matiss Karro | 199 |

MX2

| | | |
|---|----------------------|-----|
| 1 | Elliott Banks-Browne | 298 |
| 2 | Neville Bradshaw | 262 |
| 3 | Steven Lenoir | 248 |
| 4 | Graeme Irwin | 229 |
| 5 | Bryan MacKenzie | 225 |



WHAT SAY YOU?

NIFTY NED PARKER GIVES US A PIECE OF HIS MIND...

Interview by Mark Turner

We hook up with Talon Kawasaki's Nez Parker who, while recovering from a knee injury has had plenty of time on his hands to watch what's been happening at the races over the last month...

DBR: We saw you watching at Foxhill earlier this month. Do you think it warrants a place as a permanent fixture on the Maxxis calendar?

NP: "Foxhill has the potential to be such a good track but personally I think the layout has stayed the same now for too many years. If they were to do a little more with it, change it around in a few places then for sure it would be one of the best tracks in the country and would definitely warrant holding a Maxxis round there every year."

DBR: We've seen Kristian Whatley come into some good form of late. Can you see him going on to win his first British championship title?

NP: "Yeah I think it's possible for him now. A few of the main guys have injuries but to be fair he's been running at their pace most weekends anyway so you can't take anything away from him."

DBR: The team at E22 Sports have announced that there'll be more rounds in this winter's Arenacross series. Do you think this will end up being a major championship in future years?

NP: "From my point of view I don't understand why the guys at MCF don't run the Arenacross straight after the season finishes in October. Then if someone was to pick up an injury they'd still be able to make it back for the new motocross season. If they were to do this I think they'd attract more top names to do all seven rounds and then I could really see the series growing into something pretty big."

DBR: Tommy Searle seems to be coming good on the 450 now...

NP: "Yeah for sure... I think Tommy has done an awesome job already this year and in such a strong field of guys too. Hopefully we'll see him get stronger and stronger and see him putting some more good rides in."

DBR: Gautier Paulin seems to be the standout rider at the moment and looks to be the only genuine challenger to Cairoli but is it too late for him to claw back that big a point's deficit?

NP: "With the consistency of Cairoli I'd say it maybe is a little too late for him to take the title but you never know. Look at Sweden last year when Cairoli DNFed both motos. It only takes something like that to happen and then it's game on."

DBR: Finally over in the states Zach Osborne seems to have made the jump from the GPs back to the States work for him...

NP: "Yeah for sure he's doing well back over there but don't forget that Zach has only spent a small percentage of his career on the road here in Europe so going back home and racing AMA was never going to be a big issue for him."



IRN-BRY

CHICKEN DINNER!

AFTER YEAR'S OF TRYING IRN BRY FINALLY PUTS HIMSELF IN THE WINNER'S CIRCLE – EXCELLENT WORK, SIR...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photo by Ray Archer

The proposed plan was to write this month's column up on the way to the ferry port before catching the boat to Ireland for the Maxxis British Championship. The good lady was nominated as the driver, my dad riding shotgun and I was in the back with every intention to attempt to draft up the column ahead of schedule.

But no sooner had we left the house we were arriving at Cairnryan and catching the boat. Sh*t, I fell asleep. But if I hadn't been running my standard loose style that day I would have bashed out my monthly blabber in those two-and-a-half hours and would have missed out telling you about the fairytale day that followed and not forgetting the two-and-a-half hours of extra sleep I took onboard too. #WINNING.

Desertmartin in Northern Ireland is always one of the best tracks on the calendar and a weekend that I always look forward to thanks to having some awesome memories from going over there as a kid. They used to run the Andrew Chambers memorial race just a day ahead of the youth national so everyone would be over there for the week and run riot.

The Chambers family run a private bus hire company and would lay on transport to take the whole pits out for a day to a nearby holiday town – Portrush I think it was called. I remember getting chased out of there one time when we filled the town fountain with washing powder and fairy liquid and the fountain went nuts with foam, even coming out of the drains down the road. Good times.

So from the boat ride and the craic, to the track and even the relatively short journey time (for us) it's always thought of as a good fun time. Again though like many years past the rain gods tortured the place over night and changed the mood slightly come Sunday morning.

Practice/qualifying set the tone for the day and even though some of the track resembled what you put out a day after a Tikka Masala (same colour and everything) I was still feeling pretty good and comfortably secured my second ever pole position. Stoked!

The rain never stopped and by race one time it was wetter than an inappropriately signposted floor in a compensation advert and after the sighting lap I knew I wanted to be the first guy by about a quarter of a lap in because there was a lake forming right after one of the tabletops that Google were threatening to add it to Google maps.

Luckily I yanked a massive holey and put the hammer down on the opening few laps to open up a nice lead. By mid race I started to think that this might be the one – the first win – because I was still edging away and was riding comfortable.

I couldn't not think about maybe finally winning one of these things but no sooner had I started counting my chickens than I was lying upside down in a technical triple-double section. Taking off in a rut, to landing in a

rut, to taking off and landing in another it was a pretty ropery section but I was getting through it. Then one lap a lapper was in my line and not waiting to lose any time I felt I had no choice but to still jump the section so changed my line.

That was the beginning of the end however as I jumped off the side of the track and landed on a mound of sand which was marking the track. I got pitched back up into the air and into the ruts for the next double with my feet around my neck which meant I went cartwheeling to the ground! D'oh!

As soon as I stopped rolling there was an instant eerie silence and I heard the Irish fans at the side of the track erupt in a cheer as their guys were second and third at the time. One guy shouted "he's got no clutch" as I'd snapped my lever off in the wipe. I remember thinking 'I can bloody hear you, you know?' but that was that and the dream ended there and I struggled on to the finish clutchless n' all to finish third.

The rain stopped for race two and I got another awesome start and led the race from the first lap. Determined not to do anything stupid this time while in the driving seat I rode every lap cautiously – especially towards the end – and I was absolutely pumped to get my first ever Maxxis race win.

I came over the line and wanted to get back as fast as I could. You're not allowed to ride in the pits at the British championship now so I ran back to the truck as fast as I could with my bike and there were fist pumps, knuckles, high fives, man hugs and all that sh*t getting thrown about everywhere.

It was an awesome feeling to see everyone so happy and what a relief it was too. As much as I was really happy to get the first 'W' I was so massively relieved to do it at last.

There wasn't long to soak it all in though as there was still work to do as I was in position to also win the overall which would be another cherry popped. I got the final holeshot of the day in the last moto and led until about the half way point when again another random crash spread me out all over the sand.

I needed to finish third to win the overall and I started the last lap in fifth. With half a lap to go and round the back in the very technical triple-double section that claimed me in the first race, I took my nuts in my hand, held my breath and jumped through into third to take my first overall win too. Man I was pumped.

It's been 12 years I've been racing in that championship and a fair few years now that I've been able enough to chase a race win and overall so to finally do it was an unbelievable feeling and a massive relief and pat on the back to everyone that helped me get there and I hope to be able to repay them further with some more of the same. Until then though, thanks guys!

Ray Archer
#121
dirtbikerider 19



JONTY'S BOX

MIXED FEELINGS!

WHY A NEW START FOR HUSKY AIN'T SO GOOD FOR HUSABERG...

Words and photo by Future 7 Media

There's not much to get excited about when news breaks announcing that it's the beginning of the end for a manufacturer like Husaberg. Over the years the blue n' yellow bikes have played an increasingly significant part in just about all national and international enduro championships. Sadly, the end of the road is nigh...

From a quirky Swedish outfit to the state of the art Austrian manufactured machines we know today, Husaberg's 25-year story has been an impressive and interesting one. Born from the sale of Husqvarna to the Italians, Husaberg will be missed by many.

On May 16 of this year Husqvarna Sportmotorcycles GmbH announced that 'Husqvarna will enter a positive new era by combining its own rich heritage with Husaberg's state-of-the-art technology. Thus ending the 25 year life span of the Husaberg brand.' Official confirmation that after a quarter of a century Husaberg would be no more.

Seemingly everyone has something to say about Husaberg 'becoming' Husqvarna. Some aren't too bothered, some wish Husaberg would remain, others thrilled that finally Husqvarna will be headed by a company who know what they're doing – one that will do right by one of the world's most iconic off-road motorcycle brand.

Personally, I'm both excited to see what the future holds for Husqvarna and sad to see Husaberg go. In its own unique way Husaberg has brought much to enduro. Just as in motocross, when money to buy established stars was never available, Husaberg has long supported youth racers – the up-and-coming next generation, those that deserve a push in the right direction.

One of those 'up-and-comers' is Jamie McCanney – the rider likely to be Husaberg's last ever world champion. Unless Alex Salvini screws up and hands the 2013 Enduro 2 title to Pela Renet (and that's not likely) Jamie will be

Husaberg's last ever champion of note. And that's a pretty cool piece of enduro trivia that'll stay with young Jamie forever.

When the Austrians purchased Husaberg many of the brands earlier followers were anything but pleased that its independence was gone. What many forgot was that if it weren't for KTM stepping in back in '95 Husaberg most likely would have disappeared years ago. With sales failing to match their on-track successes, under KTM ownership a new course was set. One that ultimately transformed the brand into what we know today.

Over the years that followed Husaberg became more and more like KTM. Some would say the same as KTM. Backed by their own race teams, Husaberg were the brand that were 'the same but different'. The same in as much as the machinery was essentially KTM. Different because they were supported by their own dealer network and went about things in their own, unique, way.

KTM and Husaberg broke new ground in essentially taking one product and badging it two different ways. Before that point it simply hadn't been done before in the off-road motorcycle world. Sure, you could buy the same van from two different manufacturers – a Mercedes Sprinter or a VW Crafter – but not a bike.

With the Husqvarna brand KTM have something they never had with Husaberg – history, real history, and a brand that once dominated in motocross and which has enjoyed countless successes in enduro.

We all know that KTM can successfully market two all but identical products in two very different ways. But now able to mix a glorious, multi-discipline racing heritage with it's proven tech know-how, well, I'd say all the pieces are ready to be mixed together into what could once again become an off-road super-brand!



DK TAKES TIME OUT

KNIGHT PARKS UP HIS BIKE FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS...

As reported in last month's issue of DBR, David Knight was fighting to be fit for rounds five and six of the Enduro World Championship in Romania and Greece as ongoing wrist and thumb injuries left the big Manxman feeling very second hand.

However, determined to at least try and ride Knight took to the start in Romania but pretty soon afterwards was forced to stop. And this time indefinitely.

Making the tough decision to take some time out to get healed and back in full working order, Knight hopes to return to action for the final round of the EWC in France this September.



KING KURT!

CASELLI CLAIMS DEBUT RALLY WIN

KTM's Kurt Caselli won the Desafio Ruta 40 Rally in Argentina. In what's been his first competitive rally since the Dakar Rally in January Caselli took a surprising win in a field full of the world's best rally riders.

Consistently placing strongly during the six-day race, Caselli eventually held off the challenge from Chaleco Lopez to take his debut rally win. Despite winning stage five, Lopez was unable to close the gap to his teammate and finished over one-minute behind Caselli as the runner-up. Portugal's Paulo Gonçalves came home in third position behind the two KTM riders.

Although starting fast, Marc Coma (KTM) ran into trouble on stage three and lost time. Stopping to fix a fuel pressure issue, Coma faced an uphill battle to fight his way back into contention. He eventually finished the race in fifth.

GET IN!

ENTRIES OPEN FOR RED BULL SEA TO SKY

Entries are now open for this year's Red Bull Sea To Sky Hard Enduro in Kemer Turkey on September 27-29. The race, which is regarded as the most enjoyable event on the Hard Enduro calendar has quickly become one of the must-do races. This year the Red Bull Sea to Sky expands to three days. Beginning on Friday September 27 competitors will contest the Beach Race. The following day will see them take part in the Forest Race which will sort their starting positions for Sunday's Mountain Race.

Starting on the shoreline in Kemer, riders will then race to the top of the Olympus Mountain some 2365m above sea level. For more information on how to enter visit www.redbullseatosky.com...

KTM celebrate the championships won by Antoine Meo and Christophe Nambotin



NICE ONE CYRIL!

DESPRES SIGNS WITH YAMAHA...

Before the victory celebrations from his fifth Dakar Rally win had died down Cyril Despres had parted company with KTM. Since then speculation regarding the Frenchman's future ran riot on the internet forums.

Initially a move to Honda looked likely, with the decision to run his own team was also in the mix. Even a move to four wheels was debated until finally Despres officially announced his future plans.

Joining forces with Yamaha Motor France, Despres will race the 2014 Dakar Rally on a YZF450 based rally bike.

"Signing with Yamaha Motor France is one of the most important steps in my career to date and I am hugely excited by the opportunities it brings," confirmed Despres.

No stranger to Dakar success Yamaha have racked up their fair share of victories with Stephane Peterhansel and Cyril Neveu over the years. Now with Despres at the helm of their YZF450 they'll be hoping to knock KTM off the top step of the podium in January.

TEAM TALK!

ISDE SQUAD SELECTION SMITTERINGS...

News is slowly beginning to filter in regarding teams entering into this year's International Six Days Enduro in Sardinia. Team USA have announced their six-man squad for their World Trophy Team effort. And while some of the names may not come as any surprise, one rider on the list is sure to catch a lot of attention – former GP motocross racer Zach Osborne.

Better known for his motocross and supercross skills the Geico Honda rider has been back in the US chasing championships following a few years on the MXGP trail.

But in March Osborne used his downtime between the East and West AMA Supercross schedule to sample some GNCC Racing action. And it turns out he's pretty good at woods racing too.

Carding two podium results in the XC2 class at the first two rounds of the series, Osborne quickly became short listed for the ISDE. Never one to back down from a challenge he signed up to compete in Sardinia alongside Mike Brown, Kurt Caselli, Thad Duvall, Charlie Mullins and Taylor Robert.

"I'm very excited about this opportunity," says Zach. "I know it will be a challenge for me but I'm working hard to be prepared and do my best for the team. I have to give a big thanks to everyone involved in picking me, and also my team for supporting me and giving me a bike to race."

The 88th edition of the ISDE takes place in Sardinia starting in September.

CHAMPS CROWNED!

MEO, NAMBOTIN AND MCCANNEY TIE UP THEIR EWC TITLES...

With the EWC taking in two back-to-back rounds in Romania and Greece it was a busy fortnight for all as Antoine Meo, Christophe Nambotin and Jamie McCanney clinched titles in their respective classes.

First to secure a championship in 2013 – McCanney won the Enduro Youth Cup on day two in Romania. Dominating his class since round two in Argentina, the Manxman entered Romania with a mathematical chance of being crowned champion two rounds early. Needing to win at least one day to be assured of the title, McCanney won both as he recorded his eighth consecutive race win. Riding into the Parc Ferme at the end of day two the newly crowned champion McCanney was clearly overwhelmed by the occasion.

"It's incredible, I can't believe I'm an actual world champion," told the Manxman. "I knew winning the title was possible in Romania so I gave it my best shot and got the job done."

With McCanney stealing the limelight in Romania, Meo and Nambotin would have to share it in Greece as both riders wrapped up their classes on day two.

Entering the penultimate round of the season with a 41-point lead in the

Enduro 1 class, Meo still needed to push for the win if he wished to be assured of the championship. Despite getting his race off to the worst possible start when he crashed on the Friday SuperTest, the KTM rider quickly fought his way back into contention. Relishing in the dry, dusty and extremely hot conditions, Meo took control of the race lead on lap two and charged ahead to comfortably win day one.

On day two he continued his charge at the head of the field. Stamping his authority firmly on E1 while also edging out Nambotin for the unofficial outright win, Meo claimed the Enduro 1 World Championship in style. The title also marked the Frenchman's fourth consecutive world championship.

Like Meo, Nambotin also held a healthy points lead over his nearest rivals. Forty-seven points clear of TM's Aigar Leok, the Frenchman didn't need to win both days in Greece to secure the Enduro 3 crown. Nevertheless, he was still determined to win and eased his way to a 72-second margin of victory on day one. Needing to only finish 14th or better, Nambotin again left his rivals playing for second position on day two as he fought with Meo for the outright win. Setting the fastest time in all but three of the day's 12 special tests, Nambotin collected his 10th win

of the year to successfully defend his E3 class crown.

Proving as competitive as ever the Enduro 2 class saw three different riders stand on the top step of the podium in Romania and Greece. On day one in Romania Johnny Aubert capitalised on mistakes by Alex Salvini and Ivan Cervantes to claim his first win of the year. On day two Salvini returned to the top step of the podium as he fought off Pela Renet and Aubert to win.

In Greece, day one saw Renet climb to the top step of the E2 podium. Leading throughout the majority of the day, the Husaberg rider held off a late charge by Salvini to take his first win of the year since day one in Chile. Setting the pace on day two Renet looked on course for a double win. But with Salvini closing in on the Frenchman during the last lap nothing separated them as they entered the final special test. Setting the fastest time, Salvini narrowly beat Renet by just three tenths of a second to secure the win. Now with a 33-point lead heading into the seventh and final round of the season in France, Salvini looks on course to claim his first ever world title.

The Enduro World Championship concludes with the GP of France in St Flour on **September 7/8**.

It's not been an outstanding start to AC292's pro career but he's finally a part of the big show



DIRTY DEBUTANTE!

TEEN DREAM ADAM CIANCIARULO FINALLY MAKES IT TO THE RACES...

Budds Creek marked the highly anticipated pro debut of Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Adam Cianciarulo. Why so highly anticipated? Cianciarulo is tied for the most AMA Amateur National MX Championships and anyone with those kinds of credentials is hard to overlook. He also has an amazing personality for a young racer.

But instead of going the way of the infamous 'Believe The Hype' Mike Alessi debut from 2004 Cianciarulo was trying to just do his thing as under the radar as possible at Budds Creek after missing the first four rounds with salmonella poisoning.

In timed qualifying Cianciarulo landed 12th but then he nearly grabbed the holeshot in the first moto only to be squeezed out by veteran Wil Hahn. He ran near the front for the first handful of laps but then faded as a fall and the veterans got the better of him and he eventually finished 14th. In moto two he crashed on the opening lap and came from dead last to 17th.

"I learned a lot," Cianciarulo said after the race when asked what positives he could take from the day. Team boss Mitch Payton predicted his debut would go about like this, though, since everyone has been racing for over a month now. "Truthfully, I think it was

predictable, the way I look at it," Payton said. "In the first moto he started up front and then I think he was a little bit shocked at how aggressive and intense they were. And then he fell down once.

"And the second moto he got a bad start and fell down again and then he was just buried in the back. Truthfully, I don't think there's anything wrong with it. He wanted to do this, so now he'll be able to go home, he knows where he's at, and just learn from it. Now he knows, 'Wow, those guys are on it right off the bat.' So I think he's going to have to work on that, and I'm sure he will, and I think he'll get better."

BOILING POINT!

AS THE TEMPERATURE GETS HOTTER SO DOES THE RACE ACTION IN THE AMA NATIONALS....

As the temperature and levels of humidity increases across the United States of America throughout the summer months the intensity of the AMA Nationals increases accordingly too. With four rounds run this month the action both on and off the track has been scorching and so close not one person has made much of an advantage over their closest competition.

In the 250 class the battle between Ken Roczen and Eli Tomac continues to rage and after rounds at Muddy Creek, Mount Morris, Budds Creek and Southwick it's almost honours even between the two as after eight more hard fought motos Roczen only manages to eke out his already miniscule lead in the series by one more measly point.

It's Roczen's KTM team-mate Marvin Musquin who starts the month on a high by taking the overall at Muddy Creek with a 2-2 and then sealing the

deal with a 2-1 at High Point one week later. Blake Baggett then takes the overall at Budds Creek with a 2-1 while Tomac bags the booty at Southwick's last dance with a 1-2 scorecard. Meanwhile Roczen's consistent throughout and holds a seven point lead with six rounds left.

After the first two rounds Ryan Villopoto had won each and every moto in the 450 class and sat on a 12 point advantage over Ryan Dungey who'd finished second four times on the trot. Well, this month's results have been a little more mixed up but believe it or not the points advantage Villopoto holds over Dungey is exactly the same.

The KTM star bags the overall in Tennessee with a 3-1 scorecard as RV2 falters in moto two and only finishes fourth. Villopoto bounces back at High Point however – running 1-1 – and then he trades wins with Dungey at Budds Creek who takes the overall as he wins moto two. Dungey also wins in the sand

of Southwick as he notches up a solid 1-2 while RV runs 4-1.

Justin Barcia is still best of the rest and he now holds a solid lead in the points ahead of factory Honda team-mate Trey Canard who himself has a tidy advantage over fifth placed Mike Alessi.

SERIES STANDINGS

450

| | | |
|---|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Ryan Villopoto | 283 |
| 2 | Ryan Dungey | 271 |
| 3 | Justin Barcia | 219 |
| 4 | Trey Canard | 169 |
| 5 | Mike Alessi | 158 |

250

| | | |
|---|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Ken Roczen | 265 |
| 2 | Eli Tomac | 258 |
| 3 | Blake Baggett | 223 |
| 4 | Marvin Musquin | 222 |
| 5 | Zach Osborne | 185 |

BLAKE HEAVEN!

HOW A FLORIDA BREAK HAS BROUGHT BLAKE TO THE BRINK...

After an indifferent start to the season what got into Blake Baggett at Budds Creek? The defending 250 champ has struggled with his right wrist and even at the races where most pundits assumed he'd shine – like in the heat and humidity of Tennessee – he didn't.

In the past, he has always been at his best when the heat was at its worst. He definitely had the heat and humidity on his side at Budds Creek on his way to his first moto and overall wins of the year and he was also coming off a much-needed weekend of rest for his wrist but perhaps that wasn't the game-changer for Baggett.

"Blake rode really good and I'm really happy for him," Pro Circuit's Mitch Payton said. "He needed to find some intensity and he actually loaded up and headed down to the Stewarts'. Big James and Little James and Malcolm are down there and Big James is crackin' the whip on him.

"It's good for him and they're trying to just work on going faster. It's good for all those guys to ride together. And I think it's just nice to have a break from just always riding the same tracks. He wanted to do something different so I think he's enjoying it there. I'm sure it's going to work out good."



BROWNIE'S MISSION!

THE FORMER CHAMPION NEEDS MORE POINTS TO RETAIN NATIONAL #3

FMF KTM's Mike Brown made his 2013 MX National debut at Budds Creek. Having raced most of his life at Muddy Creek Raceway in Blountville, Tennessee – round three of this year's AMA National MX Championship – most people thought he'd have shown up there but his contract called for him to race Baja so he couldn't get away for his home National.

"In some ways I wish I could've been there but at the same time it would've been a lot of pressure," says Mike. "Hopefully, I can race there next year. I really do love that place. I'm not that great at putting in just one really fast lap but I do think it would help if they put some logs or tyres out there..."

Brown indicated that he hoped he could get a start and if he could he figured he could earn plenty of points on the day. However, he grabbed a point for 20th in the first moto and then dropped out late in moto two after losing a lap to Dungey with five laps to go. The 41-year-old is going to need 24 more points somewhere in the remaining seven rounds to retain his AMA National number three.



GONE SOUTH!

WHY THE MOTO-X 338 NATIONAL IS GONE FOREVER...

This year's Southwick National was probably the last to be ever held at the iconic sand circuit. Southwick has been a staple of the series since the 1970s but the track is located on land owned by the local VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and is located right in the middle of town behind a school. The lease on the land ends this year and the VFW isn't renewing the lease. That could change but as of right now it's highly unlikely. So long Moto-X 338.



CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER!

IS IT ALL IN THE MIND FOR MARV MUSQUIN?

You may remember how unstoppable Marvin Musquin was in the 2009 and 2010 MX2 world championships but since coming to the AMA he has suffered quite a few injuries – many that were not even his fault including a thumb injury from when Justin Barcia cartwheeled into him early in a moto in Texas in 2011 – but we've seen what happens when he gets it in his head that he can win.

In this year's 250cc East SX series he won his first supercross in Daytona then went on a tear, winning four of the final six races to come within one spot of clinching the East title. If his sixth place at round one was a third place the title would've been his.

Now, during the AMA Nationals, Musquin won the overall in Tennessee with a 2-2 score – the second time he has done that, with the first coming at Unadilla in 2012 – then followed that up with a 2-1 score at High Point to take the overall. It was his third overall win in the AMA Nationals but more significantly it marked his first ever moto victory, and he pulled it off by holding off team-mate and points leader Ken Roczen for basically the entire moto.

From there, he came to Budds Creek and led the first 14 laps before Blake Baggett passed him and pulled away to win. Musquin hung on for second in front of Roczen yet again. In moto two, he had a terrible start but passed Roczen (who also had a terrible start) and others to catch up to fifth before he crashed.

Still, you can see there's a massive difference between Marvin Musquin with confidence and Marvin Musquin without. "Well for sure, it feels good to win and to win a real overall," Musquin said. "Because obviously the first two I got second and then won the overall but High Point was a real win and I got the moto win which is good. Momentum, what you're talking about, for sure it's good. I just want to keep training and trying to get better."



AMERICAN IDIOT

SIBLING RIVALRY!

AS ONE GOES UP AND THE OTHER COMES DOWN ARE THE CAREERS OF THE STEWART BROTHERS ABOUT TO COME CRASHING TOGETHER?

Words and photo by Steve Cox

James and Malcolm Stewart have taken two different trajectories on their way to occupying essentially the same airspace today. James is 27. Malcolm is 20. James has never been without a full-factory ride. Malcolm has never had a full-factory ride. At Budds Creek – round five of the AMA Nationals – Malcolm and James were basically tied together in both motos battling near the tail end of the top 10 (after an early-moto James Stewart crash) in moto one and battling over third place (before a James Stewart crash) in moto two.

In both motos – for the first time ever – Malcolm Stewart beat James Stewart with Malcolm actually finishing third in the second moto behind the two Ryans.

Unlike the Alessis – or even the Hahn brothers – the Stewart brothers have never even really ridden the same brand as one another in the pro ranks. The Hahns both spent time racing for Honda and even both raced for the GEICO Honda team. The Alessis were practically joined at the hip from their amateur days racing Yamahas, then Hondas, then in the pro ranks racing for Red Bull KTM for as long as Jeff Alessi was racing at the top level.

But with the Stewarts, their pro careers couldn't have been more different. James' career is almost legendary at this point. He hit the pros at barely 16 years of age in 2002 on a factory Kawasaki KX125 where he (as a bit of a theme for most of his pro career) either won or crashed in supercross and then mostly just won in the AMA Nationals – crash or not.

He won two 125cc National championships and in his second title year (2004) he won all but one moto on the season on his way to the title.

On big bikes, James ran into Ricky Carmichael – literally, a couple of times. Carmichael was pretty unstoppable and James had a tough time doing it, too. Still, James secured the 2007 AMA supercross title and after missing most of what would've been his SX title defence in 2008 James became the second man in history to win every single moto of the AMA Nationals on his way to the title. After that, James went supercross-only for Yamaha, winning the 2009 SX title.

In total, James has won 45 supercross races (third all-time, behind Jeremy McGrath's 72 and Ricky Carmichael's 48), 20 AMA 450cc (250cc) National wins, 28 AMA 250cc (125cc) National

Wins (the record so far) and 18 250cc (125cc) Supercross wins (also the record so far).

When James was 20, he won eight AMA supercross races in the top class on his way to second in the championship two points behind Ricky Carmichael, in 2006.

Malcolm meanwhile made his pro debut at 18 racing for a privateer Nitro Circus Suzuki team. He didn't win anything but he did have some promising finishes. Then, he moved on to the J-Star KTM team in 2012 and 2013 where he did manage to win a heat race indoors. When the J-Star KTM team announced it wouldn't be able to go outdoor racing Malcolm found a spot on the TLD/Lucas Oil Honda team racing a 450 in the Nationals.

In the Nationals so far, Malcolm has continued to show speed, and as I said, he snatched third in the second moto at Budds Creek – easily his best-ever points-paying finish.

"When I have a bad weekend, I go home and work and work and work," James said. "When Malcolm has a bad weekend, it bothers him but he can brush it off easier. I think that works really well for him and maybe I could learn something from that too..."

Because of the fact that they're brothers a lot of people are talking about a 'changing of the guard' in the Stewart camp already. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. How quickly do people forget? One look at the accomplishments above and it's obvious that James is the top dog and he will be at least until Malcolm wins something.

James seems to be taking it in stride. "I got beat by him both motos this weekend," James said. "That's the first time that's happened. I think he got me one moto at High Point, too. It's not cool. [Laughs] It's not cool. And then to find out he was the one that was on my ass in the second moto [when I fell] it's not cool either! Even at the house, I've got to run. I'm still a little bit quicker than him but overall he's basically just as fast. We're both faster than Blake [Baggett] and Blake just went out there and won the overall today. So, it's not like he's slow. I mean, Malcolm got third in the second moto and he's big and he's strong. He's a bully."

But if James doesn't get back up front again soon and put a challenge on the Ryans – and if Malcolm manages to continue to beat him – James may not take it quite so easy anymore...





Enduro star Danny McCanney places his Gas Gas on the podium



David Finnamore makes the long journey worthwhile



Seb Osborne and Lewis Gregory go bar-to-bar - it's pretty much this close between the leading pair all day

RECORD BREAKER!

SEB OSBORNE SPOILS LULU'S UNBEATEN RUN AS THE TWO-STROKE SERIES GETS STIRRED UP AT CULHAM...

There's nowt like making a grand entrance and that's exactly what Seb Osborne does as he wins his maiden moto in the 125 class of the Two-Stroke British Championship putting an end to Lewis Gregory's unbroken win streak. Although Lulu bounces back to win the days remaining motos, Osborne continues to push him hard to end up as runner-up while Gregory takes his

third overall win on the trot and extends his championship lead.

The 125 Junior class is won by championship leader Rob Holyoake who is proving almost as unstoppable as Gregory is in the Expert division. With a 2-1-1 scorecard Holyoake edges further ahead of Josh Coleman in the chase to the championship title.

Jack Gregory takes maximum points in the Junior Open class and the series

leader as previous pace setter Chris Povey is MIA in Oxfordshire. Terry Lloyd and David Finnamore also leapfrog the stricken KTM rider in the series standings - Finnamore with three runner-up finishes on the day. Gregory and Povey are joined on the podium by Jack Waterman who puts a disappointing ride at Weston behind him to prove he's much happier on hardpack.

Coming into Culham just two points

separated the top three runners in the Open Expert class with Ulsterman Robert Hamilton holding a one point lead over Josh Waterman who himself was a single digit clear of third placed Luke Dean. Waterman blows that gap wide open though by taking maximum points on the day as Osborne and Danny McCanney fill out the podium as Hammy and Dean finish fourth and seventh overall on the day.

SERIES STANDINGS

125 EXPERT

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
| 1 | Lewis Gregory | 220 |
| 2 | Jim Davies | 165 |
| 3 | Daniel Brough | 149 |

125 JUNIOR

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
| 1 | Rob Holyoake | 201 |
| 2 | Josh Coleman | 133 |
| 3 | Oliver Benton | 133 |

OPEN EXPERT

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|
| 1 | Josh Waterman | 175 |
| 2 | Robert Hamilton | 153 |
| 3 | Luke Dean | 143 |

OPEN JUNIOR

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|
| 1 | Jack Gregory | 183 |
| 2 | Terry Lloyd | 138 |
| 3 | David Finnamore | 133 |

Jack Cox is the
main man in MX2



HOT COX!

JACK'S THE LAD AS THE AMCA
CHAMPS HIT PONTRILAS...

Defending MX2 champion Jack Cox does his title hopes no harm as he storms to a double race victory at the third round of the AMCA championship in Pontrilas. As well as sealing the overall win on the day the Yamaha rider pulls to within two points of the series lead even though pace-setter Richard Cannings has himself a very respectable day finishing second overall with a 2-3 scorecard. Tight at the top this battle is set to rage when the championship heads to Conover for round four on August 4.

In the MX1 class it's two-stroke avenger Adam Cook who smokes the four-poppers on his 250cc oil-burner to take the overall win ahead of Clinton Barrs and championship leader Lee Dunham. The Cookie Monster and Barrys both grab a win and a third place apiece while series leader Lee Dunham goes 2-2 to take the championship lead outright as joint MX1 championship leader heading into Herefordshire – Brad Turner – retires from moto one with clutch problems and struggles to 11th second time out

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
| 1 | Lee Dunham | 446 |
| 2 | Clinton Barrs | 382 |
| 3 | Brad Turner | 373 |

MX2

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----|
| 1 | Richard Cannings | 413 |
| 2 | Jack Cox | 411 |
| 3 | Ben Saunders | 384 |

BASIN CUT!

GET YOUR ENTRY IN FOR
MATTERLEY'S AMATEUR CLASS
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...

If you wanna take part in the Amateur class at the upcoming Festival of MX Event at Matterley Basin that runs between August 22 and 25 then you need to either drop an email or get on the blower to ACU motocross secretary Sonia Goggin ASAP as the cut off date for entries is July 19. You can get a hold of Sonia on 01788 566404 or electronically on the internet e-mail thingy at sonia.goggin@acu.org.uk.

All amateur riders that enter will not only get to race the GP circuit ahead of the stars but will apparently receive three paddock passes, one living area pass, two event t-shirts, free meal tickets and some other swag too as well as a 20 minute practice session and 15 minute plus two lap qualifying moto on Thursday. The 40 best racers will then get a further warm-up and Super Final race on the Friday where a champion will be crowned – it could be you!



DANGEROUS

IMBALIEVABLE!

NORLEY TURNS OUT TO BE GNARLY FOR OUR LEE...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Mike Wood

It seems so crazy that this is the August edition. Where did the last seven or eight months of the year go? Before we know it we'll all be at the Stoneleigh Dirt Bike show checking out the bling and talking 2014!

So as you're probably aware from the last column we had the British round of the IMBA European championships at Norley a few weeks ago. The weather was prime, the crowds were huge and the guys had done an awful lot of work to the circuit and although narrow in places and relatively one lined the Brits came away with a good day overall. For me, I had some great support and not only from the usual friends and family but from Steve James and Minty from Maxxis Kawasaki by LPE and Scott and Emma from Apico International.

In qualifying I posted sixth fastest which enabled me a good pick of the start gate in all three motos. In the initial moto I gated pretty well and was sat in about fifth before I moved up to third where I was on the rear wheel of Clinton Barrs and had Jelle Grade – an ex IMBA champion – behind me. In the final stages Jelle and I passed Barrys and I managed to get a small gap on Jelle to earn second at the flag which I was really happy about.

In the second moto I struggled to hook up another gear along the start straight. Obviously it gave me a terrible mid-pack start although I soon passed a few by launching down the inside of a group of riders. That work was all undone when someone crashed in front of and from there it was an uphill battle to get back to sixth at the flag.

In the final moto I was determined to get a decent start to try and help out in the dusty conditions. I grabbed the holeshot but ran wide in the first turn which enabled Barrys to nip up the inside and take the lead. For the initial few laps he gapped me and was riding really good. I stepped it up and found a rhythm which enabled me to get into the lead with a few laps remaining.

Stupidly I checked the time clock and saw I had three minutes left. I then focused back on the track but about five seconds later I was on the deck picking my bike back up. I couldn't believe it. After picking the bike back up it was still running so I tried to pull away and it stalled. I slipped from first to fourth in one corner! I was

totally devastated but then I guess that's racing and a lesson learned!

We then had a week or two off so with our summer finally making an appearance Browner and I took our jet skis to Mad Mike's Lake near Bristol. With sit down skis you need to launch them using a slipway which is basically a slanted road into the water.

Browner decides the best way to do this was to take his trailer off of the van and do it by hand. Within a matter of seconds Browner, his dad Dougie and me were now fishing his jet ski and now sunken trailer out of the lake after it took off and we couldn't hold onto it. But at least the ski was in I guess...

It was my turn next so I decided to reverse my car down the slip road instead of us trying to hold onto it again. Before I'd even had chance to straighten up the car, the ski was making its own way off of the trailer without any assistance whatsoever! So what looked like a bit of dodgy parking on a slipway, an abandoned jet ski and a couple of gypsies wearing wetsuits, spent all day throwing motos around the lake! Such a blast!

The following weekend it was back to racing as we had the third round of the AMCA championship at Pontrilas. It's such a fantastic track and this time was no exception. The heat was understandably taking its toll with dust and unfortunately the racing was cut short a race early. Although we had only two motos it was a good day for me and I took home two second place finishes and third overall on the day just missing out on the overall win by two points. I know its always tough controlling the weather and suiting a track for everyone but at least the hotter weather brings out the crowds.

It was so good to see Adrian Mahoney and family there watching and supporting just about every rider on the track. I also got to use my new Leatt Coolit vest that Apico sent me down the other week! The thing is like a body fridge and really does cool your core down! I can't wait to use it in Belgium and Germany in the next few weeks as it's always a dry heat over there.

On that note I'll keep you posted on those two races next issue. Be safe and good luck wherever you're riding next!

Lee Dunham
#281

X-MEN!

MUNICH HOSTS THE FINAL STOP OF THE X GAMES GLOBAL TOUR...

Words and photos by **Ricky Monti**

The first day of the Munich X Games sees three major events for FMX – Best Whip, Step-up and Speed & Style. Best Whip kicks things off with Nate

Adams, Lance Coury, Ronnie Renner, Jeremy 'Twitch' Stenberg and Edgar Torronteras all battling it out for the gold. This event is judged by the fans at home who vote using Twitter. It's Stenberg who normally gets the most tweets although Edgar Torronteras managed to turn things around in Barcelona.

This time though it's an out and out Twitch show as Stenberg gets 64 per cent of the vote with Edgar getting 22 per cent to snatch silver from Coury. The passionate fans in the stadium disagree with the decision as it's obvious whose whips are best but as nothing more than a popularity contest it's the most famous who receive the votes rather than the best rider on the night!

Step-up is next which includes the legendary Brian Deegan who comes to try and knock Ronnie Renner from his familiar gold medal spot. But surprisingly it's the Czech Republic's Libor Podmol who does the deed as Renner has an off night and fails to

shine. With a winning height of 29 feet, Podmol is joined on the podium by Mat Buyten and Renner who's third.

"I did not expect anything like that," says Libor. "I'm always happy for any medal and I was just super happy to even get the invitation because all my life I've wanted to ride at X Games. To get the gold here is a dream that come true." Although a rookie at X Games Podmol is a well known competitor on the global scene and after becoming the first non-American rider to win Moto X Step-up gold is even better known worldwide. Renner still holds the record though with a colossal height of 47 feet!

The last event on the night is Speed & Style. Lance Coury took gold in Brazil and during the qualifying session seemed very fast. Also Switzerland's Mat Rebeaud was on it but it ended up being Mike Mason who dominated thanks to his various backflip tricks including heelclickers and the underflip. That said he puts his success down to yanking the holey.

"The start means everything," says Mason. "I knew the tricks I was going to do and the lines I was going to take so as long as I got the starts I knew I'd be okay."

With all other FMX events cancelled

due to rain EnduroX was the only other event of interest to off-road fans. Maria Forsberg does the unthinkable in the Women's class and destroys Spanish trials legend Laia Sanz straight up around the technical and super-slick Munich circuit. The Men's division throws up a surprise too as Taddy 'the daddy' Blazusiak crashes twice and gifts the win to Taylor Robert.

"My first X Games medal and it's a gold one," says Taylor. "I know it's not a bad way to get 'em started. Mike Brown and Taddy Blazusiak are just amazing competitors and Taddy's probably won 90 per cent of all Endurocross races ever put on – it's an amazing feeling to be up there on a podium with those guys. In second place is Spaniard Alfredo Gomez while Blazusiak takes the bronze medal.

"I actually like these bigger X Games tracks and this one had some really big ruts that made it really challenging – especially after it rained all week. It was really hard because the mud still came up through all the dirt and pretty much every obstacle was wet and when to they get wet they get really slippery."

That concludes the European portion of the X Games global tour with just the big daddy left – X Games LA!



TURNING JAPANESE!

THE X-FIGHTERS FLY TO OSAKA FOR ROUND FOUR...

Intense is perhaps the best way to describe the Osaka stop of the Red Bull X-Fighters World Tour as Taka Higashino comes out on top in one of the hardest fought rounds of this incredible series seen so far. Although it's the local hero who takes the spoils on the night it's event runner-up Thomas Pages who gains most in the championship chase as big series rivals Dany Torres, Rob Adelberg and Levi Sherwood lose points as they finish sixth, fourth and fifth in the action packed evening. This gives the Frenchman a 60 point lead headed into the penultimate round at Madrid.

RED BULL X-FIGHTERS

SERIES STANDINGS

| | | |
|---|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Thomas Pages | 325 |
| 2 | Rob Adelberg | 265 |
| 3 | Dany Torres | 245 |
| 4 | Levi Sherwood | 190 |
| 5 | Taka Higashino | 165 |



Twitch gets Tweeted to gold in Best Whip

Mike Mason dominates Speed and Style

Libor Podmol flying to gold in Step Up

Josh Sheehan kicks back





WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

SIGNED THOMAS PAGES JERSEY UP FOR GRABS...

As outright leader of the Red Bull X-Fighters World Tour standings Thomas Pages is without doubt the most stylish freestyle motocross rider on the planet right now. To celebrate this fact we've hooked up with the purveyors of all things cool – that's www.freestylextreme.com – to offer you the shirt off his back.

The custom made Alpinestars jersey we're got is rarer than rocking horse sh*t and signed by the flamboyant Frenchie himself which makes it an ace

prize for any true freestyle fan. And to make sure only a pukka Pages fan bags this swag we've come up with a cunning question to test your FMX knowledge (you'll also find the answer in the Pages Brothers feature we ran in the June issue of DBR which you can read online at www.dirtbikerider.com for free in our Digital Vault – cool huh?).

What we want to know is this. Which French FMX legend was instrumental in helping launch the Pages Brothers' freestyle career?

Was it: **A:** Manu Troux
B: Handy Manny
C: Manu Overboard
D: Manu Alive

If you know the answer then log on to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competitions link to **dirtZone**. The first correct answer drawn at random after the closing date of **August 8** will win the main prize while five runners-up will each win a signed poster instead. Sweet!

freestyle
Xtreme.com



HOW NOT TO: RIDE RUTS!

SOME DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME TIPS THAT'LL HAVE YOU RIDING RUTS LIKE A PRO IN ALMOST NO TIME AT ALL...

Words by JP O'Connell Photos by Ray Archer

We all know how the ability to look good out on the track far outweighs the importance of where we finish the race and nothing sums this up better than the ability to eat dirt while tackling ruts – a fact ably demonstrated by MBO Yamaha's Kristian Whatley and Lanes Kawasaki's Lewis Trickett at Desertmartin. We tracked the pair down at Culham and asked if they'd mind sharing their top rut riding techniques so that we can all have a go at looking so cool!

"I think that my top tip for riding tabletop ruts would have to be that you approach the rut looking straight down at your front wheel," explains Kristian. "As you get to it blink twice, don't think about what you're going to do and then clutch it five times which is good for luck. Once you're in the rut you've got to sit right over the rear mudguard and

then keep blipping the throttle as you go through it – if you do this then you should be fine. If you don't feel fine and you feel unsafe then it's probably best to just shut your eyes again before you land."

Of course like anything else, eating dirt through ruts takes practice and the boys put in hours perfecting their skills...

"How often do I practice them? Well, like never really. I find that if you never practice them then they just seem to work," admits KW. "Another secret that I'm going to give you is to try and make sure that your front and back wheels are in different ruts as you hit the face of the tabletop. That way as you go off the jump you can say that you scrubbed it, turn the bars whichever way it throws you and the crowd will love it."

"Ronnie Mac does it real well and he's one of my heroes and I think that's

why I've been doing so well at eating dirt this year. I have to say that if it was between throwing the biggest whip ever or eating sh*t on a jump then eating sh*t wins every time – you've got to eat sh*t sometimes so if you're gonna do it then do it well!"

With Kristian being a self confessed sh*t eater it should come as no surprise that there's a whole host of other riders that like nothing better than a good rut induced soil sample. Lewis Trickett was another pro who was more than happy to share his techniques with us.

"I have to say that I was ecstatic with the rut tumble I took at Desertmartin – it was brilliant! Pulling that off was the culmination of a lot of time and hard work," enthuses Lewis. "A great technique is to always make sure that you're staring at your brake disc on the way in so that you can only see the start of the rut, midway through

squeeze the front lever as hard as you can so that the back end kicks over and drops into the rut next to you – do that and you'll be eating dirt in no time."

With track time limited during the week Lewis always makes sure to set a good proportion of it over to looking good through the ruts.

"If I go to a practice track and it's got a few good ruts then I'll practice all day long – in fact the only spares we take are clutch plates, brake pads and levers. I would say that my number one tip for a good rut induced soil sample would be to go in to them as fast as you can, hit as many bumps as you can and then give that front brake lever a good pull. Crashing is pretty much a dead cert. I think dropping it and eating dirt is pretty much on a par with winning a round of the British – if you could do both in the same race then that would be the pinnacle of your career!"



*Whatley wids wuts like
a winner – woop woop!*



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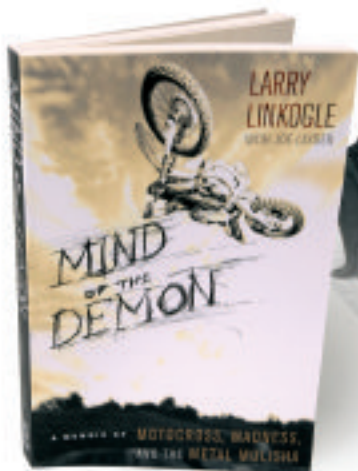




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Price: £199
Supplier: chestprotector.co.uk
Contact: chestprotector@outlook.com



MIND OF THE DEMON LARRY LINKOGLE BOOK

Love him or loathe him there's no denying that Metal Mulisha co-founder Larry Linkogle always has plenty to shout about and in his new book – Mind of the Demon – there are over 230 pages worth of his words to keep you entertained. And they are very entertaining words too as not only is Larry one badass dirt bike rider he's also a talented writer and always has plenty of interesting anecdotes to share – most of which are printed in this here book.

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We love Eks Brand goggles up here at DBR Towers mostly because we're a big bunch of poseurs and love the way the awesome frame colours, straps and mirror lenses pop out in riding shots. But there's way more to it than that as Gox goggles fit great, are well vented and seal to your face well too – basically they're everything we'd ever want from a motocross goggle. Try 'em yourselves because we can guarantee you won't be disappointed.

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Ed Bradley gets to grips with Yamaha's new MX1 class beast



YZ450F

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Capacity: | 449.7cc |
| Bore and stroke: | 97.0 x 60.8mm |
| Transmission: | Five-speed |
| Fuel tank capacity: | 7.5 litres |
| Front suspension: | KYB SSS fork (310mm travel) |
| Rear suspension: | KYB Shock (315mm travel) |
| Front brake: | 250mm disc |
| Rear brake: | 245mm disc |
| Seat height: | 965mm |
| Wheelbase: | 1480mm |
| Ground clearance: | 335mm |
| Racing weight: | 111kg |



It would seem that Yamaha have been pretty quiet for the past couple of seasons and it's easy to forget how successful the brand has been over the years. When it comes to innovation Yamaha have always been right at the forefront of new development and in 1997 this Japanese manufacturer pulled out the shock of the century – catching all the others with their pants down – by revealing their factory 400cc four-stroke which kick-started a whole new generation of four-stroke motocross machines and ultimately changed the face of the sport.

After a development period of 12 years – which included the introduction of Yamaha's aluminium frame – in 2010 the R&D team pulled out yet another radical manoeuvre and produced the first backward engine ever seen in motocross. It follows a logical flow for gases with air in through the front and exhaust gases out the back. Although the 2010 YZ450F was technologically a great leap forward, in terms of performance it was not that much better at all.

The first generation for this new style of motor layout has now been superseded by the latest generation bike and Florence is where we got to test this new machine at a super circuit called Ponte a Egola which is a Grand Prix track from as far back as the mid '80s. Falling out of favour with the world championship circus in recent years it's resorted to hosting Italian championship races instead but is still a banging track. Under serene blue skies and in 30-degree plus heat we got to make the bike sing around this hardpack and hilly circuit and before we go in to that let's discover what Yamaha have come up with...

The new YZ450F has had a whole host of modifications and updates, the main attention being on what all the manufactures seem to be focusing on at the moment and that is mass centralisation. The goal is to move as much weight low down and toward the centre of the bike as possible which is creating a new level of rider confidence in the ability to throw the bike around as if it's a kids toy rather than a traditional style, big n' heavy 450cc machine that has a whole lot of inertia limiting the rider in manoeuvrability – especially in the air!

They have achieved this by moving the electrics, wiring and fuel pump around which also improves the serviceability and access to the cylinder head. This may only seem like small components that weigh very little, however, by doing this they have been able to move the fuel tank lower inside the frame. The fuel tank is bigger as a result and holds over seven litres of petrol and because of its relocation Yamaha have been able to redesign the airbox, intake and filter but I'll expand on that in a wee while.

The frame itself is smaller and has nearly the same dimensions of the 250F's chassis which continues to add to the mass centralisation. The rigidity is improved and there is a new steering head tube that is 10mm closer towards the rider – this improves the feel of the bike for when you are sat this blue steed. Fitted to the new head tube is a newly designed triple clamp with rubber mounted bar clamps.

One of the most obvious changes to the bilateral aluminium framed chassis is the sub-frame that looks peculiar to the eye. It is smaller in design and is lighter too but can still take the weight of my fat ass easily although it still seems strange that there's no airbox in there – just plenty of room for the shock!

The shock has been changed back to a piggyback style reservoir now that the exhaust pipe has a new route which I'm sure also means that there is less heat to warm up the shock body and helps eliminate any fading. I wish the same could be said about me as I was melting in the high Italian heat after a couple of laps of riding.

At the front end of the bike the forks remain with a cartridge style system although the front axle has now been increased in diameter from 20 to 22mm for more rigidity to give better rider feedback and a more direct feel to the track surface.

In the motor department there have been small but significant changes that will add to Yamahas backward facing engine performance such as increased cylinder head intake port volume with larger intake valves that are opened off a new cam profile. The exhaust valves have also been increased to match the flow of the intake gases too.

Just below the valves is a modified piston which increases >>

YAMAHAULER!

WITH YAMAHA PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS TO MAKE THEIR NEW YZ450F A WINNER WE FLEW ED BRADLEY OUT TO FLORENCE WHERE HE GOT TO RIDE THE MACHINE...

Words by Ed Bradley photos by Ray Archer



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combustion of this locomotive and reduces friction to make it a slippery light blighter. To hang on to and deliver the better production of power this four-fiddy has new clutch plate material to put the power down on the ground. To give a lighter clutch feel Yamaha have given it a better clutch cable too – it's the little things that count!

A major change to the engine is the removal of the oil tank and the transition to a wet sump. This means that the crankcases have been redesigned which gives a reduction in weight – not only by using less material but from the oil quantity too as the engine now holds only 0.95 litres compared to 1.2 on the 2013 model.

To improve the power delivery for 2014 Yamaha have re-routed the exhaust pipe around the cylinder which has given extra length to get some much needed torque from the power delivery. So instead of heating the shock up, like on the 2013 model, the cylinder is now going to get an extra hug of loving warmth (this was no problem when we were riding although I did notice that my knees were warming up when we started doing some stopping and starting and waiting around with the bike idling). More importantly though the end of the silencer is a noticeable 18mm closer towards the bike, improving to the bike's mass centralisation.

The gearbox has had some love too. The selector and drum has been modified, third gear is now shorter and more in line with the other gear ratios to make a smoother transition between shifting gears. We know this for certain because the graphics that we were shown in a presentation had been highlighted in a different colour!

One of the best things about this new generation machine is that the airbox has been completely redesigned and now only involves removing three bolts to make a filter change. If you are already a YZ450F owner you'll know how awesome this is. The filter is more like a conventional motocross foam filter and the air duct above the radiator scoops is boxed and channelled straight into the filter area which should reduce the amount of dirt heading into the box. This design also reduces, almost eliminates, the odd Hoover style sucking noise you get from the air filter being above and in front of the engine. These two things – easy access to change the filter and reduced noise – are massive benefits over the previous models.

However, if you have been on a 2010 to 2013 model bike then sitting on the 2014 machine will blow your mind because it no longer feels like you have a space hopper between your thighs. The Japs have chopped off a massive 8.8mm on

each side of the off the bike by reducing the radiator width allowing them, in turn, to reduce the width of the air intake. The result being a bike that feels almost normal when compared to conventional forward facing engined machines.

Adding to this super slim feeling is the fact that there is no fuel cap on display. The fuel filler is tucked neatly under a seat-like padded cover with just the breather pipe sticking out. It's hardly noticeable that there is no fuel cap but it just gives you a subconscious safety cushion knowing that there's nothing there to whack your nuts on when riding!

Our first session out on the hilly, tight and twisty circuit was with everything set to standard – suspension clickers, fork height and ECU map with only the preload set to our individual weight and of course the bars and levers set to our own liking. The track had its fair share of braking bumps, a few ruts and berms with some small kickers on the jump faces. It was ideal for discovering what this bike had to offer where it matters most – turning out the laps.

The layout of the bike feels great with a comfortable footrest/seat/handlebar positioning that will suit both shorter and taller riders alike. It feels light to ride too and right away you notice that this bike is really easy to turn in a quick, easy and precise way while the bike still





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Direction changes come easy on the brand-new 450

maintains its stability on the longer straights.

The more I rode the bike, the more my confidence grew – especially on the jumps. The movement towards mass centralisation is the reason for this growth in rider confidence. Straight away I wanted to scrub everything that had a take off and if there wasn't one, I wanted to find one! I felt that I could lay the bike flatter and turn the bike more across the track as I went over the tabletops – more than I was doing and still land the bike in total control. It was more a matter of daring myself to do it rather than being scared of the consequences of going too far!

As the track had been watered in the morning by the time I got out there, there was plenty of grip even though the ground was drying up fast so the power delivery went down really well with good feedback on the motor's response from the right hand movements!

The low-end power is really playful – responsive and strong which is great in the tight turns and for building up speed on the exit of turns although I did struggle to find a happy

ground between second gear which ran out too quickly and third gear which was just a little too tall for the tight corners. This is mostly because as the power moves away from the low to mid-range it is hit by an almighty surge of power that feels like someone has a massive hand on your back pushing you forward. It's incredible and on a track with grip as we had here and circuits that are sand and loamy then this map setting will be right up your street.

The next time out on the track I tested a softer map curve that would knock out the torque pull and an even softer mapping curve than this one. The track had dried out so the aim was to find a power delivery that would be smooth enough to get great drive out of the turns. What I found out was that the softest map just meant that I was thrashing the nuts off the bike all over the place and I didn't feel like I was getting anywhere fast and that the bike became noisier around the front of the bike where the air filter is as air was being rapidly sucked in. The setting in between was just right though – it was Goldilocks

bed and perfect for her! Smooth enough to be able to put the power down hard out of the turns and strong enough to keep the bike pulling and driving on the top-end for the longer straights.

This bike definitely has a new attitude and on a technical, demanding track in heat of over 30 degrees all I wanted to do was get back out on the track so I could ride this bike again and it continued to inspire me each time I went out on it.

It would also seem that this new attitude has found its way into Yamaha UK's heart too as there will be plenty of the 2014 model bikes to go around and they are massively cheaper than previous offerings too. With the 250F sharing many parts with its big brother production costs are down and the retail value of this new generation machine is nearly a grand cheaper than last year at £6599. I'm sure that's music to your ears...



To see more of the 2014 YZ450F and Ed riding it head online to dirtbikerider.com

THE WORLD CHAMPION

WEEKEND WARRIOR!

*DESPITE JUGGLING WORK WITH
HIS RACING 18-YEAR-OLD MANX
SPARKY JAMIE MCCANNEY HAS
JUST WRAPPED UP HIS FIRST
ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP...*

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds



MCCANNEY



Smokin'! Jamie gets dirty in front of Jonty's camera at a Husaberg pre-season photo shoot

McCanney doesn't consider himself to be a 125cc rider and moves on to bigger bikes whenever he gets the chance



Four years ago I didn't even know what enduro was. I didn't know who raced it, who was world champion, nothing. To be honest I only cared about motocross and what I was doing from weekend to weekend. This day four years ago I never thought I would be a 2013 Enduro World Champion.

"Coming into this season I was probably the most underprepared that anyone has ever been as I literally only rode the bike for five hours prior to the opening round in Chile. It wasn't by choice – I was sidelined through injury. In December 2012 I underwent an operation to fix my shoulder that kept dislocating. I'd been having trouble with it for about two years and when I was riding in November it popped out again.

"I knew then something needed to be done and an operation was the only way to fix it. The trouble was the amount of time it was going to take to heal. When I looked at the calendar the date I could start riding again collided with the first round of the season. That was pretty worrying. But there was nothing I could do. I had no choice but to get it fixed.

"As time dragged on I started to get more stressed. Husaberg had drafted me on to their factory team. I was given a golden opportunity to prove myself but I couldn't ride a bike. When they flew me over to the official photo shoot just a couple of weeks before Chile everyone was putting the finishing touches to the winter training. All I'd been able to do was sit on the couch.

"All I managed during that weekend was a couple of corners for the cameras. I knew by my progress that I was only about 60 per cent ready to fly to Chile. I was nowhere near where I felt I needed to be to race for a world championship. But I had to try. After all I was a factory rider wearing the same colours and graphics as my team-mates. Not riding wasn't an option.

"To get out of Chile with two second place results was beyond my expectations. I was hoping for fifth at best – especially in that heat. Somehow at the following round in Argentina – the very next weekend – I won, and both days at that. I think that's when mentally everything began to change.

"I'd gone to South America questioning everything about but I left it as the championship leader. Flying home on the plane I knew I could be world champion. I believed that if I could win at 60 per cent then I was the guy to beat when I was 100 per cent ready. It was a good feeling to have.

"When I step back and look at the season it seems strange to have won nine races in a row. I didn't really notice it happening. I was just concentrating on one day to the next. It's weird but I don't even remember standing on the podium for some of them.

"At the end of the fourth round in Portugal I sat down with the team manager Thomas and we discussed that it was possible to win the title in Romania. But shortly afterwards they swapped the dates and ran the GP of Romania before Greece so I didn't really know where I could win it. In the end I had to get the calculator out and do the maths. Turned out Thomas was right and that if I won both days in Romania I could be the champion.

"Winning the first day set me up to clinch the title on day two. I didn't need to win the race – I think fourth or better would have done – but I ended up winning it by nearly two minutes.

"Riding into the paddock at the end of the day as a world champion was incredible. The final enduro test was about 20 minutes away from the pits. The whole way between there and pits I couldn't stop smiling. After everything I'd been through this year, to still finish as the champion was crazy.



With the title wrapped up the celebrations could begin



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JAMIE ON...

BIG BROTHER DANNY

"As much as he annoys me at times it's good to have my brother racing in the EWC. Aside from having someone you know at the races to walk tests and talk to he's there if something goes wrong. Last year in Chile he got the job of phoning home to tell my mother that I'd just hit a dog and ended up in hospital with a broken wrist and collarbone. Thankfully I didn't have to make that call!"

KNIGHTER

"David Knight gave me a start into enduro. He loaned me his KTM 300 EXC to race in the BSEC. I was only 16 and was a bit young for it but was grateful for the opportunity. The only way I could get it to stop looping out when I rode it was to hook a taller gear. Having someone like David to ride with has been great. He's a special talent on a bike and easily one of the best hard enduro riders in the world."

INDEPENDENCE

"I think some people find it strange that our parents don't come to the races but it's sort of the way we've always worked. They work hard and don't always have the time to be there. But in a way it's been good. It's forced Danny and myself to stand on our own two feet. We have to think for ourselves and do things for ourselves. It's helped us become a lot more mature."

INJURIES

My shoulder injury all started at the World 125 Youth Motocross Championship race I did in Italy in 2011. I was in about fifth place but got hit on a downhill. Another rider ran into my rear wheel and broke my rear brake. I couldn't stop and crashed into the metal fencing about 10 metres off the track. My fingers got caught in the wire and the momentum literally pulled my shoulder out of its socket. It popped back in and two weeks later I rode the British youth class at Desertmartin. I got a bad start and rolled the step-up like everyone else. Unfortunately, someone decided to jump it and landed on my back and I crashed big. My shoulder dislocated again and I ended up losing both youth championships because of it."



Jamie finds the BSEC series to be great for special test training

"You see the celebrations on the TV and always think that one day that might be you. But it's not until it finally happens that it all sinks in. Winning the title in Romania is something I'll never forget but I'm realistic about it."

"I'm still at the bottom rung of the ladder and I've got a lot more to work on. Obviously, it's the best possible start that I could hope for in my career but there are more important titles to be won. Hopefully, this is a stepping-stone in the right direction."

"Next up is the Enduro Junior class and that's where it all begins to get more serious. Already I'm mentally racing that class. Even though I didn't have to push myself for the title in Romania I couldn't stop comparing my times to the Junior class."

"Every time I got back to the pits I checked the results to see where I'd fit in. At one point I was running third. I had the enduro test dialled in as it seemed to suit the 125 but I kept messing up the extreme test every lap. I got stuck on a rocky uphill and lost about 10 seconds so I've still got a lot to learn. My inexperience really showed there so it's something I've got to work on."

"I'm not suited to the 125 but I'm glad I've spent two years on it. I think that bike can often get overlooked. With so many bikes to choose from most people think that more power equals more speed – but that's not the case in enduro."

Riding the 125 has made me start from scratch.

"I've learned so much about picking the right line and carrying corner speed. Getting the basics right will make the transition onto the bigger bike a lot easier. Guys like Antoine Meo and Juha Salminen all started with the 125 and it's helped them. Hopefully it will be good for me too."

"Training is difficult. Living on the Isle of Man is hard. We're slowly running out of places to ride. We're not allowed in the forests so most of the time we end up riding sand at Jurby. It's not really ideal for enduro. For British championship level it's okay but the EWC is a whole other level. Moving to Europe is something I have considered."

"Everything about living in Spain is more suited to the EWC. There's more opportunity to ride hard packed trails and the races are similar to the EWC too. It's a big move to make but one that needs to be looked at if I want to progress."

"Progression is one of the reasons I left motocross. It was becoming almost impossible to compete at the sharp end. I was stuck at home with nowhere really to ride when everyone else was practicing midweek on the track we were going to race on. By the time race day came around they were already up to speed, clearing every jump on the very first lap. I felt like I was playing catch up all the time."

"When the offer came to ride enduro



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I decided to take it. I did it to save on my Dad's wallet. We had no support in motocross and it was costing a fortune on ferry fares to go race. We had help from the Manx Sports Aid but trying to win was always going to be an uphill battle.

"My brother Danny had already made the move to enduro and was doing well. Despite only racing a couple of British Sprint Enduro Championship races I was still riding and training with Danny at home. I was close to his speed and felt that I could do something in enduro. Plus being offered a ride with Husaberg before I'd even raced showed that there was support available. Now I'm in a much better place.

"I don't really have regrets about quitting motocross. I feel I'm much further ahead in my career than if I'd headed to the Brit MX. I'm already a world champion. I don't even need to buy a bike let alone bring one to the race. I've got a factory team that look after me and support me at the races. At the minute all I have to do is book a flight and go. I'm travelling around the world doing something I love.

"Trying to achieve that success in motocross has become next to impossible. Nathan Watson is my best mate and I can see how hard it is for him to get the support he deserves. Motocross is all about money and how much of it you can bring to the table if you want to qualify for a Grand Prix.

"There're guys paying 70 grand just to race and to me that's insane. It seems that you've either got to have serious backing or be stupidly rich to progress. Unless you're extremely special you are not going to make a lot of money at it.

"But like I said I still haven't 'made it' yet. I'm still essentially a weekend warrior. The only difference is that I just happen to be a world champion. At home I work as an electrician. Thankfully, I've got an understanding boss that allows me to take time off to ride and go race.

"Having a trade is important to fall back on if racing bikes ever goes tits up. The further up the ladder you get the harder it is to succeed. Riding for Husaberg I can see how hard guys like Pela Renet and Mathias Bellino work. They are constantly trying to improve all the time, so I know how hard I need to train. If you're not working hard you can guarantee someone else is..."



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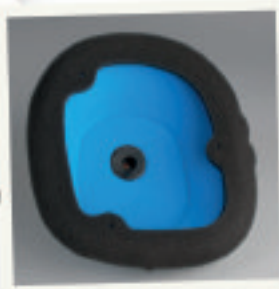
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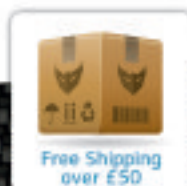
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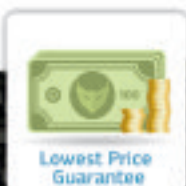
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SWORD UNSHEATHED!

AFTER RECENTLY ANNOUNCING HIS RETIREMENT, STEPHEN SWORD CHATS WITH US ABOUT THE DEFINING MOMENTS, HIS FIERCEST RIVALS AND THE MAJOR INFLUENCES WITHIN HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER...

Words by **Jeff Perrett** Photos by **Ray Archer**

Stephen Sword has been a name synonymous with British motocross for well over a decade. He's won the Under 21 title twice, been UK Supercross champion twice and is a four-time British motocross champion – and when he hasn't been winning, he's always been a true title contender.

Like any sportsman with his pedigree, there comes a time to bow out and Stephen recently announced his decision to quit professional racing – the same day as fellow Scot Sir Alex Ferguson ended his managerial career, in fact. However, Swordy will still be actively involved within the sport as head coach at the Dave Thorpe Honda Off-Road Centre – a job that influenced his decision to hang up his racing boots.



Although Swordy was quick on the CCM an MX1 title eluded him

DBR: When did you know it was time to knock it on the head – was there a defining moment?

SS: “Yes and no, really. I can’t remember exactly when I made the decision but I always knew that this was going to be my last year of racing. I half contemplated it last year but it just didn’t seem right to go then and I still wanted to do well but you start to question yourself a little.

“It’s not the same – when you’re 33 – as when you’re 23. It’s the right time. I think I was one of the oldest riders out there in British MX and, if I went and did a GP, I would be one of the oldest too. It wasn’t an easy decision to make but what helped make my decision was that I had something else to fall into. You can’t just walk away from this job and do nothing – or, at least, I don’t feel that you can. I wanted to stay around the people I know and still be involved so I’m glad it’s worked out the way it has.

“If the opportunity with the Honda Off-Road Centre and Dave [Thorpe] came two years ago it would’ve been too soon for me but now was the right time. I soon realised, once we started it, that I couldn’t dedicate time to both racing and the off-road centre, so it was time to end my racing career. Since I made that decision, it hasn’t felt like the wrong one.”

DBR: How much did family life influence the decision? You must be looking forward to spending more time with them?

SS: “Yeah, I am. I think to be a motocross rider you’ve got to be committed to the point of being selfish at times to do it properly. I’ve been doing it for so long and I’m not one who can do

anything other than 100 per cent and turn up at the weekend. That’s sort of what was happening this year and why I knew it was time to stop. Physiologically, I can’t be like that. I’m not interested in trying to scrape into the top 10 or top 5 – it’s not me.

“I’ve obviously spent time with the family while I’ve been racing but my mind has always been on preparing for the weekend. Now I’m completely relaxed – you ask my missus! She’s been wishing I’d be like this for the last nine years! If you’re a racer you’ve always got it on your mind. When you wake up on a Monday, whether you’ve won or not, all day and all week you’re thinking about the next race. So, without really knowing it, you have to be single-minded and sometimes selfish about the time you can dedicate to other people, in order to be good at motocross. I’ve been so used to going to the gym but I haven’t been since I quit racing. Even that feels a bit strange because it’s been part of my life for so long.”

DBR: You may not have had proper time to reflect on your career yet but, off the top of your head, is there an obvious highlight?

SS: “When I was younger, my goal was to win a British championship race, then a British championship after that. Naturally, your goals get higher and higher but I would have never imagined as a kid tearing around a field at seven or eight years old that I could’ve won a GP. I only won one GP but that and leading the world championship was the highlight for me.

“It goes in stages – the first British

>>



Before he got injured in Germany Swordy was stirring things right up in the 450 class

championship was special and then others followed – they are all special moments in my life really. Once you've won a championship your goals move and your confidence grows and you have to constantly aim to keep improving yourself, while your body allows. I've raced for factory teams and I've ticked all the boxes – for me anyway.

"It would've been amazing to win a world championship – obviously – but that's for an elite few and I'm happy with what I've achieved. I've had a lot of injuries, like many others, and maybe without them I might've been a world champion but that's just the way it went."

DBR: Okay, at other end of the scale, what was the low point?

SS: "My ankle injury put me out for 18 months and at the time of the injury they said I would probably never race again. For half a day I believed them but I was lying there in the hospital bed looking around me and I thought, 'No way - I haven't come this far for it to end here.' It was a long road back. I had 12 operations but I just kept working hard and a lot of people had faith in me which really helped me through it.

"Molson Kawasaki signed me for the following year while I was still in hospital. Fox and Oakley stuck with me with good deals which gave me a lot of confidence that I could come back to a high level again. To be fair, I think I had better deals given to me lying in a hospital bed than I did when I was fit!"

DBR: You've always presented yourself well as a professional sportsman – perhaps that helped, in that moment, to earn you the support you received?

SS: "Yeah, maybe it did. In this game – because the industry is such a small world – you can't go around burning bridges. I've been lucky enough to have some good people behind me who have supported me all the way. People like the guys at Fox and Oakley for example – they've been behind me for so many years. I've had better financial offers over the years but those guys supported me through thick and thin and that's important to me. For the most part, money talks – especially in professional sport – but sometimes the actual relationship is more important for success."

DBR: Let's go back to when you were leading the World championship in 2004 – riding high, only to be hit by a low that wasn't your doing. You were unlucky – did that frustrate you?

SS: "A little at first but you have to accept that is part of racing or you'll beat yourself bad. I was leading the Italian GP at Gallarate with Cairoli behind me. The bike nipped up over the big downhill jump – which wasn't ideal to say the least – and I had a huge crash and messed up my wrist. That first half of the season, when I first went to Jan De Groot's factory Kawasaki team I was the most consistent out of everyone. Then, around the half-way mark I had a bike break in one moto and a crash in another but I was still second coming into Gallarate. I finished fourth in the championship but, if it wasn't for that crash and the injury, I probably would've finished second behind Townley because I had a good points gap over Cairoli and Rattray. There are always ifs and buts though, aren't there?"

DBR: Did you ever feel that was your chance to win a world championship and the momentum had been lost?

SS: "No, I didn't think so at the time. You should never give up while you're racing. Looking back, 2004 and 2005 were the two years when I was at my strongest on a world level. In 2005 I was eight points off Cairoli, when I went testing, slipped off in a corner and broke two bones in



Sworley and the Albion KTM at Gaildorf back in 2002

my hand. I wasn't even going fast! I think that final little thing needed to be a world champion is that little bit of luck and good 'breaks' now and again – especially when it is as close between riders as it was between us. I wouldn't say I had the fastest bike in 2004 and 2005 but I probably had the most reliable. It was swings and roundabouts really."

DBR: I'm not sure if you need reminding of this but I'm going to ask you anyway! Describe what it was like when your throttle stuck, over that jump at Teutschenthal, and you busted your ankle?

SS: "I remember the whole lot clearly. A moment like that is hard to forget. Let's just say it was scary! It was practice on Sunday morning. I was on a half tidy lap and was flat out, heading into that tabletop. I went to brake but the bike just stayed flat-out. I had no time to bail off so I just hit the take-off and was way, way up there. If there was a downside to hit, I probably would've landed it but I was way past that. I stayed with the bike until just before I was going to land.

I think if I hadn't stayed with the bike it could've been worse.

"I landed on my right foot and that's all I had wrong with me – I completely busted up my right ankle and heel. I sat up pretty much straight away and I knew I'd broken it. The pain was getting worse and when I got into the medical room they gave me some drugs and pretty much knocked me out.

"I came around a bit more in hospital and by then they thought I'd broken my back as well because my scan showed a chipped vertebrae but that was from a previous injury. I sat up when Jodie turned up and the doctors started to go mental! With broken English and feeling a bit bombed out, I had to explain that I had hurt my back before and it wasn't broken! They fitted a fixator – you know, those metal cage things – and that's what gave me an infection. I then had to go to my doctor in Belgium who decided it was best to get the fixator off and plate it. I woke up from that operation in agony – the worst pain I've ever known – to the point I just wanted to be knocked out.





Swordy on his way to wrapping up his third British title at Pontrilas



Stephen has always had a lot of time for his young fans



The MacKenzie/Sword wars were big news in 2003

"All told, it took two bone grafts, 12 operations and nearly two years to get back to the level I was before the crash. I was 26 then. If I had done that the other side of 30 it would've been game over. That ankle has never bothered me since though – in fact, it's stronger because the bones are fused together. Having said that though, I have to admit my whole body does ache a lot more now. It takes me a little while to get going in the mornings now!"

DBR: Oh, I hear ya on that! And I've hardly injured myself down the years. It's a tough old game but that's why it's so appealing isn't it?
SS: "Yeah, you're right but, for everyone, there comes a time where you just can't compete at the level you want to anymore and that's where I'm at now. I'm not going to get any fitter as I get older. There's nothing I can do in my fitness programme to make my injuries any better or go away and they eventually take their toll. Finishing a week early, rather than a week too late is better, so to speak."

DBR: Who have been the stand-out, influential figures in your career?

SS: "It's an obvious thing to say but my family have helped me so much, from the beginning right to the end. My dad, in particular, has influenced my racing. Having said that, he changed a bit after my injury. I think it may have shaken him up more than me. I stopped getting so many bollockings after that! Not that he was ever a shouter but he would tell me if he thought my riding was crap. I think after that crash he was just happy to see me get back to the truck in one piece."

"Jodie has been amazing too. I met her two years before my accident and she was always right there, throughout that, when I probably wasn't the best to be around. She pretty much looked after me for 12 months. I was depressed at one point – really badly. I didn't want to get off the sofa, get up, go out or talk to anyone...nothing. It was the pain that dragged me down. Jodie even admitted later that she overdosed me on the painkillers, at times, because I was struggling that much."

"Dave [Thorpe] has been a big influence but there have been others too. It doesn't matter who it is. There can be someone, like Dave, who's raced but also someone who hasn't but knows how your mind works and say the right things when you need to hear them. Tim Elverson has also helped me so much by keeping me focused and keeping my feet on the ground. The Church family have been amazing too. I moved down there from Scotland when I was 16 and they took me in, like part of their family, so I'll always be grateful to them. They treated me like their own and they still do and have been a huge influence on my career."

DBR: How did your working relationship with Dave come about?

SS: "It started with the under-21 stuff and he was doing some coaching, for the ACU I think. Then I rode for him on his AXO Honda team and just continued to work with him from there even though he didn't run a team for a while after that. He's helped me so much. If you can't get inspired to raise your game, working with



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someone like that who has reached the top and knows what it takes to get there, then you never will."

DBR: There must've been some 'hanger on-ers' during your career. How have you managed with that?

SS: "Well, the injury sorted that out. You know who really wants to talk to you because they ring you up. When you're doing well everyone wants to talk to you. When you're injured and out of the game it makes you realise who your true friends are. I always tried to be good to everyone because I wouldn't want to come across as arrogant but, at the same time, there aren't many people – like Jodie, Dad, Dave, Tim and a few others – who I'd really trust."

"I think young riders who want to go the distance could do themselves a favour and learn that early on. The best thing they could do is find a small team of people they can really trust, who have their best interests at heart. Sometimes the parent has to see that too and put faith in others – my dad did. He's always been involved and there for me but as I grew up he realised I was my own man and knew that others could perhaps help me in ways he couldn't. I've got to give him credit for that."

DBR: Apart from the time out with injury, I think it's fair to say you've been consistent through your career. In my opinion that's down to your character – would you agree that's a fair thing to say?

SS: "Yeah I'd say so. There have been times where I've pushed in a race, when maybe I shouldn't have but there haven't been too many that I can remember. There's that fine line isn't there? As you get older you get wiser too and learn how to win championships which is what the goal is as a rider and team. You learn that it's a long year and I think that has helped me to win the championships I've won."

DBR: Talking of championships won – to this day, one of the most exciting races and championship climaxes I've ever seen was at Polesworth, for the British 125cc championship, between you and your 'arch rival' Billy MacKenzie. You both seemed to thrive on the 'good guy – bad guy' rivalry, what was it like?

SS: "I enjoyed the challenge and I'm sure he did too. It was good for both of us, I think, as well as for British MX. You know what Billy is like – I think he really enjoyed the 'bad boy' image. It wouldn't be like that now. By all accounts, he's chilled quite a bit and I'm sure he'll say moving to Australia was one of his best decisions. It never really spilled over between us off the track. I mean, he would shoot me a few looks in the pit box or around the pits and stuff but it seemed like people enjoyed jumping on the bandwagon and had to be either a Swordy fan or a Billy Mac fan. It worked for us both and rivalries are good."

"Billy was one of the most aggressive riders I've raced against. He always went into a race with the attitude that it was him against the rest of the world – that's what worked for him. He was my biggest rival in British MX. I peaked a little bit before him at GPs but racing in the UK, around that time, we were pretty evenly matched. He probably had more raw speed than me but he threw a few races away by charging too hard. He was younger and that was his style – at least then. He probably saw the red mist more than me."

DBR: Obviously Billy wasn't your only competition so, looking back, who do you think was the best pound-for-pound rider you raced against?

SS: "I think it's got to be Cairoli. Look where he is now! He struggled to qualify in his first year and early in GPs but the following year he finished third and just grew in confidence so



A seized engine caused this huge crash in Italy



British title #4 was won with the HM Plant KTM team in 2009



The view most racers will remember of the Scotsman...

much. I think that's his real strength – he has so much self-belief. As much as he's an incredibly gifted rider, it's another good example of the benefits of having a good team of people around you, too. Claudio DeCarli has been with him all the way and I'm sure has been a huge part of his success. Townley was so good too – he was another really mentally strong rider. Both those guys – and Rattray – were all so good and they raced hard but also fair. It was great racing with them and I'm happy that I was able to. It's nice to be able to say that and be in that bracket for those few years."

DBR: Was racing in America ever on the cards?

SS: "Yeah but I didn't fancy it. I only really ever wanted to race GPs. I used to go to America a lot with Tim and we stayed with Greg Albertyn a lot. He said to me, 'If you can run top five in the GPs for six or seven years, don't bother coming here unless it's really a lifelong ambition.' Learning Supercross at that stage isn't easy and so many get injured trying. I would've like to have raced a national and now, looking back, it would be nice to say I had won one but it's not a major regret. I've ticked most of the boxes I set out to tick."

DBR: Team management – does that tickle your fancy, further down the line?

SS: "Never say never but you know, as well as I do, that you've got to make money to put food on the table and support the family. We'll see. The management side – maybe – but I'm not sure if I'd want to be a team owner. That's always a risk. One more box I would like to tick is 'British MXDN team manager'. That would be a cool thing to do – and an honour. Right now though, my focus is the Honda Off Road Centre and I'm happy with that. I'm riding a bike more than ever but without the pressure."

DBR: You're not going to do a Paul Scholes are you? The next thing we see is you lining up behind the gate next year, at the first race?

SS: "Nah, that's not going to happen. I did retire on the same day as Alex Ferguson though. He stole my thunder a little bit to be honest!"

He may not leave a legacy quite like Ferguson, but it's fair to say that Stephen Sword has been a true ambassador for British MX throughout his career. We wish him well with this new chapter of his life.





THE JOURNEY!

FROM THE AUSSIE OUTBACK TO MX2 CONTENDER - THIS IS THE DEAN FERRIS STORY...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

Dean Ferris recently posted a tweet something along the lines of 'two front covers, enjoying the love'. The truth is that the soon-to-be 23 year old Monster Energy Yamaha rider is one of the most charismatic members of an MX2 Grand Prix field in an endless chase to world champion Jeffrey Herlings' rear wheel. Just five minutes in Ferris' company and you have a convincing feeling that the Australian has the mettle and the confidence to be one of the few to eventually take the challenge to the Dutchman.

Ferris has earned his press spotlight thanks to a couple of podiums this year, pole positions and the kind of rapid starts that saw him fill the role of Super Final protagonist in Qatar and Thailand and routinely be one of top Yamahas amongst the KTMs. All this and

his signature was the last confirmed by the Monster Energy Yamaha crew – the Steve Dixon division – for 2013 as they sought to fill their six rider quota.

If he came into the framework as an afterthought then Ferris has quickly established himself as arguably Yamaha's most important motocrosser this season through another term of poor luck with injuries and form across the Rinaldi/Dixon camps. He is pursuing a top five slot in the MX2 standings at the time of writing and you only have to wonder where he'd be if he hadn't sat out round three and the Grand Prix in Holland just over a week after collarbone surgery.

The fact that Ferris – who almost won the Australian Championship in 2011 – goes about his business with a smile and slight swagger makes him one of the more appealing riders in

the category and his nationality helps him achieve further distinction. It is 12 years since Chad Reed last dazzled Grand Prix and eight since the late Andrew McFarlane gave the Aussies reason for cheer in the FIM contest.

Australians, like other non-Europeans, have a different take on Grand Prix racing. In a way it is tougher due to the distance from their native land but in another way they bring a kind of single-minded fire and focus that can often carry them above their rivals. Ferris in particular has a rough and interesting story and it is testament to his open character that he is comfortable to sit down and chat about it. More press time indeed – and there is the feeling that it won't be the last – even if he does have to bow to the ridiculous MX2 age limit for 2014 and move up to the 'MXGP' class.

>>



DBR: You're in Belgium for the race season but I guess Australia will always be home. Where are you from? What is it like?

DF: "I'm from the east coast and in the middle, so it is quite tropical. We get rain in the summer... which is perfect because it is hot for training but then a storm will roll in and the tracks get watered! In the winter it is sunny every day but dewy at night and around 20 degrees. It feels like the weather is perfect where I come from and plays a big factor in our sport."

"I grew up on farm of 1600 acres and a saw mill. I was just a rugrat running around. I had an unlimited fuel supply as we had a bowser at home. I never had any sh*t-hot bikes but I'd just top up whatever I had and just ride, ride, ride, in the hail or shine, probably more in the rain than anything. That's all I ever did."

"I had chores to do on the farm and I was driving tractors when I was nine and things like that just to help out. I'm a modern kid but I grew up in a life of an older generation – like in the '50s or something when kids could do anything. There were no restrictions because I lived that far out of town. I got up to some mischievous stuff, like playing with fire and petrol..."

DBR: What about school?

DF: "School was 30km away. I was always the last person on the bus. My mates lived in town and I would hang out and sleep at their place... there was never anything to do!"

DBR: What about going from that removed lifestyle to one where you started racing? That must have been a contrast and your parents must have needed to take you miles...

DF: "Hmmm, no, not really. Up until I was 14 or 15 I was only doing local races that were a couple of hours away. I did my first national championship when I was 15 and it was a day-drive to Canberra. I just gave it a go and I was a quick rider because I had done so much of it at home."

"When I turned 16 I finished school and got a job but at the same time I had support from Yamaha. My dad passed away when I was 11 and that restricted me from racing any earlier in life but my mum did what she could and we got around the races... it was not like they were driving me all over the country from the age of five. It was not like that."

DBR: But are there many kids like that in Australia?

DF: "There are. I never 'read the script' but all the other racers went through juniors and their parents were on the road for 25-30 weekends over big distances. That's not my story. I just practiced at home and rode for fun until I got older and realised I had some talent."

DBR: Did your mum and family recognise that talent the same time as you did?

DF: "Yeah. I always felt I could do well but with the situation mum was in as a single parent it was really tough to manipulate how I could go about business. I learnt really early the best way to get things done. It was not fair for me to push the limits with what I wanted to do."

DBR: Can you give an example?

DF: "There were always chores for me as a kid and a big responsibility helping out. I never had dad there to help me or work on the bike. Another thing was that financially we didn't have the money. It was really tight. At the same time that my brother got a job and stopped his racing I put it to mum that I really needed her help to



*He's a long way from home
but has settled in well with
Steve Dixon's Yamaha team*

support me, and she did. I worked hard and mum worked hard. My cousins – I have a massive network of family that lived close by and they helped me out all the way, ever since I was on 80s just getting to races – they all stepped-up to push me on until one point it was like a firework and I just got fast really quickly. The next thing I knew I was stepping into factory trucks. I mean, there is a lot more to the story after making that first breakthrough with various ups and downs but that's how it began."

DBR: Can you explain that switch of how you became fast so quickly? Was somebody guiding you?

DF: "I don't know. I think it was a confidence thing. I was quick on 80s but there was always something holding me back. I found that the bigger the bike the more confident I became. Somebody put it to me one day – because as a kid you are not sure if you are gonna 'make it' or you don't know how your family will feel when you tell them you want to be a professional racer – they said 'how far are you willing to go? I had a sleepless night after that. Finally I woke up some time in the morning and said to myself 'right, I'm gonna fu*king make it' and from that point on I looked for every little thing that could make me become better."

DBR: How old were you then?

DF: "I had just turned 16."

DBR: At that age you couldn't have been thinking of Europe and Grand Prix...

DF: "No, not at that age because something like that seemed so far in the distance. It was a goal that I would come to set to keep me hungry but at that point I didn't know if I would make it. I was always taught to dream big, so I did. The biggest influence on my career was a guy called John Hafey. He was my mentor and coach and got me the deal with Yamaha originally in Australia. He brought out the confidence in me that I have now."

DBR: How did he do that?

DF: "Well, one day he left Yamaha and I was still with them and I could see how much good he had been doing for me. I just approached him and said, 'I want you to help me and I don't know what I can do in return' because I wasn't a rich kid. I was only 16 and I can remember to this day where and when I said that because he replied that I would be the last motocrosser he would help – as he had done quite a lot – and in return all he wanted was a ticket for him and his wife to watch me ride the des Nations. >>

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Ernee produced one of Dean's strongest performances this year



It blew my mind away that he thought I was that talented or had a chance of representing the country. Anyway three years later John and I were on the line at Colorado for the Nations. At the time when he said that, I thought 'man, you're crazy' but it happened and I'm now so far beyond that."

DBR: What about discovering motocross on a bigger scale as a teenager? Seeing the crowds and dealing with the attention of a National in Australia?

DF: "I was 15 when I saw my first National and at the time Craig Anderson and Daryl Hurley were the fastest. I was actually racing because I was in a rookie class and I got to see how much quicker they were and take in everything going on. I was one of the top juniors but I saw that I had a lot of work to do. I needed another 10 seconds a lap and I thought 'how am I gonna do that?' I felt like I was on the limit! You never know. You just keep working and working and then suddenly it is 2013 and you can look back on those moments, see the progress, and think 'that's pretty cool'."

DBR: You said you got faster when you discovered bigger bikes. What happened there then? Were you caning 80s and two-strokes?

DF: "Man, I only had one bike a year so I couldn't afford to smoke it. I got by on no budget, just buying a few tyres and sneaking a few free from my cousin who worked in a tyre shop. I was in good place to practice though and I was getting fast without really knowing it. I just couldn't wait to get home from school and get the gear on, go riding with my mate and burn around until dark. I wouldn't even have the full kit, just a helmet and no gloves. I was a full weekend warrior! It was like that until I started to get some support and began ripping through parts just because I could."

DBR: Was there a moment of doubt? Like the first time you might have smashed yourself up. Did you wonder if the lifestyle was something you wanted?

DF: "No, I had some big crashes and managed to bounce back up. To be honest the biggest one was probably in Holland earlier in the year. I don't know what it was but the trauma from that crash was so bad. It was crazy how much pain I was

in... but then eventually it goes away and it's time to go again."

DBR: So how did you end up in a Grand Prix paddock and some fill-in rides with a factory Honda?

DF: "That was in 2010. You know the saying 'you have to take a step back to go forward'? Well that happened that year. I was on a factory team in Australia – that wasn't any good – for 2008 and 2009. I had a bad year and got dropped and the team manager burned me and made sure that nobody looked at me for 2010. He told me I was a nobody and I wouldn't get anywhere."

DBR: Why?

DF: "That is just how the guy was. I don't know why. I think I'm pretty friendly to everyone in the paddock and quite well respected so I'm not sure what he had against me. I went privateer on a Honda and I put everything I had into it. Once again I had to ask my mum for help and she stepped up. I borrowed money from her and promised I would pay it back whether I made it or not. It was a make-or-break year. I would either get another ride for 2011 or be in debt and



looking for a job. That actually opened the door for me to come and have a look in Europe because I didn't have a contract and nobody could tell me what to do. I had been looking to get to Grand Prix for a couple of years but it wasn't until I ran into Ben Townley at the second round of the Canberra Nationals and he just walked by me in the pits and said 'I like the way you ride dude, very smooth with good technique'. I pretty much took the bull by the horns and told him I wanted to come to Europe and needed to know how to do it. He got me in contact with Glen Dempsey [rider manager] and three weeks later I was circling the Grand Prix paddock. It was that privateer year that allowed me to get started over here."

DBR: It must have been a nice eye-opener seeing a GP for the first time...

DF: "Yeah, yeah. It is a big scene but the speed was more than I thought. I did a couple of races and didn't do as well as I hoped I would. I realised I would need a good bike. So I decided to do another year in Australia, do some more winning and gain that extra speed that I knew I needed to come back in 2012 and that's what I did."

DBR: That led to what must be one of the low points

of your career what with the shoulder injury and a premature end to the MX1 season in 2012...

DF: "Earlier in my career I used to get depressed about getting injured but that doesn't really happen any more. In 2012 I hurt my shoulder and went for the operation so the year was done. I was disappointed but the worst thing was that I didn't get to show the GP field once again what I could do. It was so frustrating."

"I had been pushing to get the bike [the IceOne Kawasaki, the team now runs KTMs] better and that was happening very slowly. I got a fifth in Brazil in qualifying and then led the race in the mud. I was knocking on the door of the top 10 and had some good battles with riders with more experience. I knew where I could be but then the next moment my shoulder was done and I was out for six months."

DBR: People know that you were the last signing in place for the Steve Dixon Monster Energy Yamaha team in MX2 and 2013 started with that podium in Qatar and you have really established your name here. So do you feel part of that Australian heritage here now with names like Reed and McFarlane?

DF: "I didn't really think about it until you guys starting pointing out that I was one of four Aussies >>

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to get on a Grand Prix podium. When you mention it then it feels pretty cool."

DBR: Going back to your family what other influences and presence were there?

DF: "I have a twin sister – she was never into bikes – and an older brother and I guess you have to thank him for me riding and racing. We are friends now but we never used to be. We used to fight a lot... and he's 6ft 5 and built like a brick sh*thouse! He used to beat-up on me pretty good and I found the only way to get back at him was to be faster on a bike. That really drove me to be better when I was younger."

DBR: What about your mum? Was she a guiding force or was it difficult for her?

DF: "I'm really independent for my age and have travelled a lot on my own. Yeah, we're friends and we chat. She's Swedish so she's obviously lived in Europe and given me advice. Actually I have a Swedish passport so I can thank her for that. It makes travel in Europe a lot easier. She pretty much backed me when I wanted. It was tough for about five years after my father passed

but without her I would not be here that's for sure."

DBR: I can only imagine how much your father's death must have knocked you sideways when you were 11... did you have a close relationship with him?

DF: "Yeah... we were best mates. That year he passed, 2001, was the year we started racing so we had only done six or seven together and I remember every one. We used to work together and I was a handy little kid around the farm. My whole life changed that day. Everything changed. We had to sell the business and then a couple of years later sell the farm because it was too big. My mum had this vision for us kids that we were free to choose what we wanted with our lives and the farm was holding us back because it was too much to handle. My brother, sister and I are actually successful in the paths we have chosen. He is an engineer and my sister is a farm girl – she works on a facility that is half the size of Belgium! She is only one of a few in control of this farm, so it is a big deal."

DBR: Your Dad passing away... does that feel really distant now or do you find yourself thinking about him, even when you race?

DF: "We talk about him in the family and it's nice. We like to talk about him. I'm friendly with some of his friends and I like the stories about him. Sometimes it does feel like a long while ago because it is half of my lifetime since he passed away but then it feels like I was only doing something with him yesterday. I have a really good memory of my childhood and sometimes he feels very close."

DBR: It is not like 2013 is your first taste of life away from Australia and sampling life in Europe but do you still feel the distance of being here from home?

DF: "Yes and no. I've got more to life than just the bike and I'm set-up quite well in Belgium and have some friends there. It is like I have two separate lives because how I live here is so different to how life is in Australia, but I'm happy here. Obviously it is a lifestyle wide-open with motocross. It is something you dream about when you are younger – travelling and seeing the

Before proving himself in MX2 many thought Ferris was a better 450 rider





world – and I actually try to stop and take-in where I am a little bit. I'm quite an adventurous kind of kid and the days are not just about getting in and out of a motocross track. I hope that attitude will keep me fresh."

DBR: I'll put it to you that the majority of Australians use Grand Prix as a stepping stone to the U.S. and there are examples to support that. The uniqueness of your nationality here could really set-you up in the world championship... but are you already looking further ahead to other pastures?

DF: "The plan I set out years ago was to come here for a few seasons and then move onto the USA but obviously things do change. I still do want to try the USA but I might be here longer than I thought. I don't mind. Hell, if I end up staying here then I'll be pretty content. We'll see what happens but I have a few things I want to achieve here first."

DBR: In MX2 you are definitely one of the main guys to emerge this year but you could say that there are still some question marks when it comes to MX1. Some unfulfilled potential. Do you think you need a couple more podiums on the 250 before a factory

crew gives you a chance in the bigger class?

DF: "I do. I want to be on the podium more than I have been. I still don't think I have been riding that good and I'm still searching a little bit. It is funny you guys say that because over here I have not been successful in MX1 but in Australia I have not been successful in MX2! They think I cannot ride a 250F and those here question my 450 skills! To answer your question I definitely think I am a better 450 rider."

DBR: Finally, do you think it would be really nice for you one day to be like Ben Townley and be able to walk through the pits and give another youngster a chance simply through status and contacts in the sport?

DF: "Yeah, that would be a nice way to round off the story... to be able to open some doors for people. I already do. I've got some kids I look out for in Australia and I coach them and offer guidance. It seems that almost all motocrossers go through the same story – bad training habits, girls, parties and this and that. I will go through more things that I need to learn because I am still young but it is cool that I can start to help."



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LEAN STREAK!

ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL TEAM MANAGERS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR SPORT MICHELE RINALDI'S CURRENTLY NOT HAVING MUCH LUCK — HODGE HOOKS UP WITH MONSTER ENERGY YAMAHA'S MAIN MAN TO SEE WHAT'S UP...

Words and photos by **Alex Hodgkinson**

The Rinaldi Yamaha organisation has been one of the most successful teams in the history of motocross, winning 125 and 250 titles in the early 1990s with Donny Schmit and Bob Moore and losing the world's most important four-stroke series just twice in the 10 years from 1999 to 2008. Injuries have devastated the team in recent years with not a single rider in the top 10 of MX1 GPs through 2012 and 2013. Hard times for Michele Rinaldi, but the Italian, 125 world champion in his own right as a rider in 1984, was man enough to answer our questions during a recent visit to the GPs.

DBR: What exactly is your role within the Rinaldi organisation nowadays?

MR: "I am behind everything. Either directly or through somebody else I have my eyes on everything. I have to follow everything in the workshop and also take care about changes and planning. I have to be fully aware of everything that is going on on a daily basis. The everyday running of the race team is covered by team staff but I am updated every day about what is going on and I am there personally in the workshop.

"The tuning organisation and the team are completely separate organisations. We have a small group of people taking care of the team and I have to be behind them to survey what is happening — I am more daily involved on the R&D because this is done by very few people. And of course I have put together a staff in both organisations whom I can trust implicitly — the final decision has to be down to me most of the time but I need to know that I have staff whom I can trust and whose judgment I can rely on."

DBR: After so many years of success it must be very frustrating for you and the team in recent years?

MR: "The last couple of years have of course been very frustrating. We won six years in a row with Stefan [Everts], 2007 Josh [Coppins] got injured in Loket with four races to go when he had a 107 point lead, even more than Stefan ever had, and 2008 we won with David [Philippaerts]. Since then the main problem has been injuries but when you are not winning it is frustrating. We had a long time on top, now we have been struggling for a number of years but you cannot do anything about injuries."

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Up until the Swedish GP where Christophe Charlier finally took an MX2 moto win Michele Rinaldi has had little to smile about in recent years



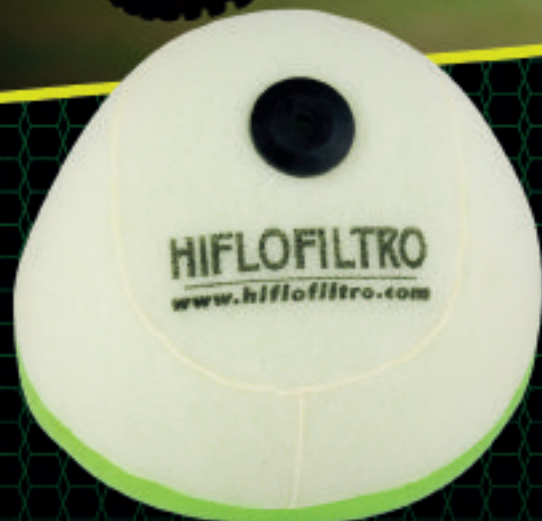
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Stefan Everts was almost unbeatable on Michele's marvellous machines



DBR: How difficult is it to maintain motivation through the lean years?

MR: "Of course it is more difficult to maintain motivation within the team when you are not winning. The atmosphere is different – when you win everything feels perfect and the problem is to survive through the injuries, particularly when you have suffered so many as we in recent years. It is particularly difficult when there is nothing you can do to correct the bad results."

DBR: Steven Frossard was second in the world in 2011 but last year he got injured and this year he got injured. It is not easy to always be on top but it is even more difficult to be so far away from the top when you can do nothing about it?

MR: "I have to be there to try to maintain the motivation amongst the team members in these circumstances. This is a very important element, to really stay close and try to see what can be improved but the group is very important. In the past this was an outstanding factor in our team and it is important for the entire team that they know that I am there for them, even on the days when they do not see me. My heart is in the team. I do not go to the races very often anymore but it is even more important for me to be there as often as possible when we are not winning."



Rinaldi's racing days netted him a 125cc world championship title

DBR: How small is the dividing line between success and failure?

MR: "I think nobody knows how small the division is but I guess every team is on a knife edge all the time and you can fall either way. For many years we were winning and the last few years not but the effort and the skills are the same. I am sure KTM were working just as hard when they were losing as they have done during the last few years when they have been winning."

DBR: How does Yamaha feel about the lack of success?

MR: "We work very closely with Yamaha Europe. They are informed daily about what is going on so they know at the same time as we do what is happening. There is no suggestion that we need to report and explain. It is obvious and visible every day. We are going through it together and they share our frustration."

Josh Coppins and David Philippaerts in 2008



Andrea Bartolini tested success with Rinaldi





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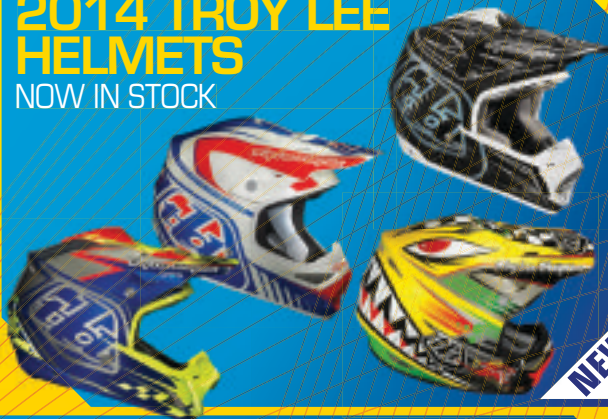
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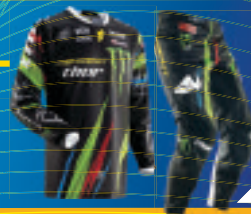


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DBR: And Monster Energy, who are still waiting for their first title since they became the title sponsor of the world series?

MR: "The relationship with Monster Energy is through Yamaha Motor Europe. Of course I know through Laurens and I understand that they respect and understand what we are trying to achieve, and of course they are unhappy about the results but they believe in Yamaha."

DBR: How difficult is it to replace injured riders?

MR: "It is impossible to replace injured riders. The riders who are contracted to race the world series are the best riders in the world and those who race national championships are simply not of this level. Even some of the riders racing GPs are not of the top level but the riders who stay in their own countries do so for a reason. It is impossible to find a replacement even from the USA because the riders who might be good enough from there are also contracted to factory teams to race there."

DBR: Does R&D still supply kits to other teams?

MR: "We still produce some kits in R&D for teams like Kemea-Reytec, but this is a decision of YME."

DBR: In MX2 Christophe Charlier rides a fuel injection MX2 for you but Steve Dixon's riders use a carburettor engine. How does that work?

MR: "Until today it seems to work quite separately... but also quite well as both are successful. Steve has to go his own direction and we take ours because our direction is not only linked to racing activity but also to YMC Japan. Often we have things to try which are not entirely for racing today so the direction can be separate. It is not in the system but sometimes it can happen like now."

"I'm sure it looks strange from outside – and maybe something will change in the future – but we have commitments to both Yamaha Motor Corporation and Yamaha Motor Europe. Racing is YME, and it is possible for every team to go with its own riders and its own tuners to get the best results. This is the case with Steve – in the past he was totally independent and now he is part of Monster Energy Yamaha but he continues to work with Cosworth. I really do not know if this will continue – that is a decision for YME."

>>>



Coppins was unlucky not to deliver a title or two



Gautier Paulin – the one that got away





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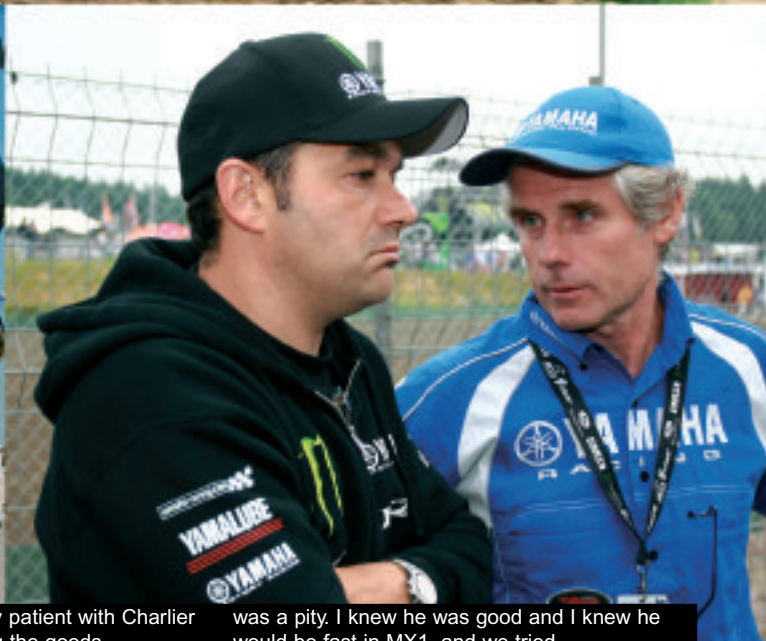
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Joel Roelants has struggled with injury in his debut year for the Rinaldi team



DBR: You have been very patient with Charlier and he is finally producing the goods...

MR: "Originally I was worried to be obliged to work with Christophe. I knew he was potentially a good rider but I knew from Giacomo Gariboldi that he was very complicated rider to work with. When he was younger he was not very professional off the track – he was not mature but now he has learnt and he will get better and better. He has realised that by himself."

DBR: Do you regret letting David Philippaerts and Gautier Paulin go?

MR: "We knew why we had to change our team and let David go. We still remain friends, but it was time for change and to look to the future."

"Of course I regret that Gautier left the team. He is the only rider with whom I wanted to continue who decided from himself that he would leave the team. It was the first time for me that I wanted to continue with a rider and I could not. It

was a pity. I knew he was good and I knew he would be fast in MX1, and we tried."

"It came down to the fact that he didn't just want to be one of the three riders in the team – he wanted to be team leader."

"We were supplying the same material, the same support, the same attention to all of our riders but he wanted to be the leading rider in the team, ahead of Steven Frossard and David Philippaerts. And I have to respect and be fair to everybody in the team – this is what makes a team! With another team he could be the leader, but with us, he would be one of three, even if we knew that he would be very, very good."

"Also I have to say that originally he was aiming to go USA, so for the long-term we were not counting on him and we could not destroy our other options for one year, two years. We even made a plan for that and we wanted to continue with him, but he decided to go. And I think money played a big role too!"

DP19 claimed the 2008 MX1 title in Faenza



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GRAEME IRWIN

| proprobe

HE MAY HAVE BEEN A MOTO WINNER AT THE DESERTMARTIN MAXXIS BUT ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THIS ULSTERMAN'S MONTH...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Suttly

Q: You seem to have really found your stride this season with the new Suzuki team. Is it just the bike that suits or the package as a whole?

Derek Watson, Preston

A: "It's the package as a whole definitely and working with Neil Prince is the bonus – it's definitely the secret behind the whole team, his expertise and experience. The bike is also excellent, it's got a real good motor and really good suspension which I think has been the key for me this year."

Q: Neil Prince is a man in the know, how do you get along with him and has he been giving you riding tips?

Bryan Sampson, Kettering

A: "I get on really well with him! As for riding tips... well let's just say that whenever I ride his 125 two-stroke he just tells me to 'shift the fu*king thing!' To be fair he pretty much leaves me to it but he always keeps an eye on me and if I'm doing something silly or he spots a faster line on the track then he'll let me know."

Q: You've been on three teams in the last three seasons, do you not feel that continuity would be more beneficial?

Matt Crayfar, Wimbledon

A: "I think if you take the first team then I was with KTM for three years but I felt that the MX1 bike wasn't for me and I wanted to come back to MX2. After breaking my neck I went to Roy Emberson's team and had a really good year there. I went to his team as a nobody and Roy was really good to me last year and then this year obviously I moved on to ride for Suzuki GB and Neil, which was a real big step for me."

Q: You're going strong in both the British championship and the RBPNS. Do you feel that this is your season and your best chance of winning a British national championship so far?

Shaun Nefeli, Bridgend

A: "This was a new bike for me and a new bike for Neil so the start of the season was always going to be hard but I think that we're finding our feet now and I think that we can definitely finish the season strong. We've got one of the best bikes out there and everything's

good so it's just down to me now."

Q: After the huge crash you suffered a couple of years ago did you ever consider throwing the towel in?

John Harris, Canterbury

A: "No I never ever thought about throwing the towel in – it was always a case of get fit, get healthy and get strong. Straight after my neck I knew what I wanted to do, I wanted to go back to MX2, find my feet and to try and start winning races again. The first time I jumped back on the bike there was no issues, no problems with jumps, the crash wasn't in my mind but it was something I had to take seriously – you can't rush back and for once I listened to what the doctors told me!"

Q: I was at the Weston RBP round as you took the overall victory in front of the MX1 boys... Oh, hang on I remember now... you crashed three turns from the end! How much of a gutter was it to have had that victory snatched from your grasp?

Clive Barrow, Midlands

A: "Hahaha, for god's sake, rubbing it in or what? Yeah I was gutted... I can't even believe he asked this, cheers Clive! With three corners left I had it, I didn't even have to push I could have stayed on rode the insides and had it but then a silly mistake and it was all over. I still won the MX2 though and got the £400 so I was happy!"

Q: With two decent domestic championships in the UK is it still your plan to try and land a GP ride?

Ian Bolton, Crewkerne

A: "I would love to do the GPs but I don't know about the budget and stuff. I think that nowadays that if you're not on a factory team then you have to bring money or be sponsored onto a team so unless something magical happens then I won't be doing them."

Q: Who has been your best team-mate and why?

Jim Hopkins, Bristol

A: "I've been really lucky as they've all been good, I got on well with Jake, Stephen Sword... I n fact it would have to be Stephen Sword to be fair, he was really, really good to me the first year I came to England. He arranged for me to stay at his girlfriend's mum's

house, let me train and practice with him and I'm really appreciative of that. I think it brought me on a lot, so definitely Stephen."

Q: If you were given a bog stock 250F to ride Hawkstone on what would you change on the bike if you were given £500 to spend?

Colin Bowker, Stroud

A: "I'd get a £20 set of graphics off eBay and pocket the rest!"

Q: I think I remember reading an interview with you where you said that had it not been for a surgeon friend of yours you'd have ridden the second moto of the French GP with a broken neck and probably paralysed yourself, am I right?

Graham Makin, Poole

A: "Yeah you're right, that's a good friend of mine Ian Doby and it just so happened that he rode his bike down to the French GP to watch me. They x-rayed me at the track but straight away it can be hard to spot a broken bone in your neck and so it wasn't spotted. My head felt like it was falling off my shoulders and I was out of it so Ian insisted that I was taken to hospital. It turned out that if I'd moved my head the wrong way then it all could have been a very different story for me so I'm definitely lucky he was there and I feel he was meant to be there."

Q: If you were given the choice of a brilliant British ride or an average GP ride which would you take and why?

Brad Collins, Greenlaw

A: "Well I think I've got a brilliant British ride now so I'm happy, I race to be at the front so an average GP ride battling for 10-15th isn't for me."

Q: Is it true that you, Stu Edmonds and the Crockstar all live together in a caravan with only your dogs for company?

Guy Ritchie, Landan

A: "We wish, we wish! To be fair that's not true as Martin Barr actually stays with us too, in fact all the guys from NI that are doing the British Championships all live together in a caravan!"



Pela Renet transformed from a motocross world champion straight into an enduro one – skills!



TRANSFORM

WITH NO REAL FUTURE LEFT FOR THEM ON PLANET MX AN INCREASING NUMBER OF TOP MOTOCROSS RIDERS ARE TURNING THEMSELVES INTO OFF-ROAD RACERS SO THEY CAN TAKE ON THE EWC INSTEAD...

Words and photos by **Thomas Bohner**

A good number of grand prix motocross riders are moving over to the Enduro World Championship where increased competition is making the move tough for these newbies. Nevertheless, it seems that riders who deal well with the motocross side of off-road sports still have the advantage as in recent times more and more EWC tests are starting to resemble motocross tracks with plenty of jumps and high speed turns. With that in mind it's easy to work out why some EWC podiums are filled with ex-MXers.

But it's not all fast and furious. Anyone familiar with the sport knows that riders ride through gruesome terrain for about eight hours on each of the two days of an EWC Grand Prix. Approximately one hour of timed special tests (motocross, enduro and extreme) determines the classification if everyone is punctual reaching their respective time controls. So, that's about seven hours on a bike for only around 60 minutes of fast-cornering and jumping fun! It also involves the Friday night 'hell' which counts towards the classification. This lasts a little over a minute and is a scenario akin to a Roman games. The organisers call it 'Super Test' and riders have to fight man-made obstacles, stones

and logs under the watchful eyes of a massive crowd who all seem to be itching for blood.

With so many MX imports making the move to the EWC in the past few years we were curious to find out more so we went for a chat with a dirty dozen or so who have moved to enduro to ask them what life is like without the MX GP buzz. While the majority doesn't miss it at all, the excitement of the starting grid still brings back some good memories...

While many of the newcomers to the EWC inevitably find themselves thinking, 'What am I doing here?' others, like Christophe Nambotin, had smoother starts. The French KTM factory rider started in 2005 at the European Enduro Championship while he was still competing in the French motocross series. "I didn't feel a big difference between enduro and motocross as my trainer was an enduro specialist so I was already learning a bit of obstacle riding. I liked the enduro straight away – you don't pass the same place over and over so I liked that for a change."

When Nambo's team-mate in the KTM factory squad, Johnny Aubert, came to the EWC in 2006 he found it all too easy to get onto the podium – on his first ever GP! He immediately had no doubt that he could be a successful

enduro rider. Four years after that Pierre Alexandre Renet arrived on the scene, carrying an MX3 World Champion title and managed to get on to the EWC podium after his third attempt. 'Pela' got onto the Husaberg factory team the following season and is presently one of the top EWC riders.

TM Factory rider Aigar Leok came to the EWC in 2011 and it was all new and strange for him as he only decided to do it a week before the first round! "I never rode over trees and stones before and to be honest, after the first three rounds I was ready to quit!"

Jeremy Tarroux made the move at the end of the same year and the first time he competed found it incredibly difficult. "The motocross special was not like an MX track at all – that was just the name! The enduro and extreme tests were very difficult too so it was all a big shock...I think a rider needs one or two years just to learn. It's mostly the physical demand of riding for such long time on the bike that represents the biggest challenge."

That's something Loic Larrieu agrees with. "The pain I have in my body on Monday is different! 16 hours on the bike over two days plus changing tyres and doing mechanic work on the bike... well, it's a totally different



ALIEN TERRITORY

THE EXTREME SPECIAL TEST THAT SCARES THE EX-MXERS SENSELESS...

During an EWC weekend there is a selection of timed tests with various levels of difficulty. But then there's the Friday night Special Test which is an absolute terror in the form of rocks, logs, and whatever slippery stuff organisers can think of. It has become the ex-motocrosser's worst nightmare...



LOIC LARRIEU

"Oh man... I see the name 'Extreme Test' and it's all I can think about until I get there... It's much better for me now and I actually think I can do well on them. I watch my team-mate who is a world champion and I learn as much as I can."

EX-MXERS

challenge but I'm definitely enjoying it!"

While there is some hardship to contend with there's one thing all ex-motocross riders do like and that's the warm feeling the EWC paddock offers – they all say it's like being welcomed by a new family. You can see the camaraderie as riders from different teams gather for a barbecue on the Friday before the following day's fight against the clock on the special tests.

When Antoine Meo showed up at the EWC in 2008 he thought of just doing it while recovering from a two-year injury before going back racing the MX GPs the following season – something that never actually happened. "I remember having a very arrogant attitude towards the enduro riders as I was only there on a temporary basis but soon some top riders helped me to change my opinion. During one GP, Juha Salminen came to me and told me that I was very fast that day – that I was untouchable. That was him congratulating me! I just thought 'this is unbelievable – no one says things like this in MX!'"

The friendliness of the paddock also took Kornel Nemeth by surprise. "It's pretty funny because in MX almost nobody says 'hi' to one another which I really, really hate. But at the enduro, people are completely different – they are cool and they talk to each other. I really love it!"

Manuel Monni also prefers the vibe in the EWC pits. "What happens in motocross is that the rivalry on the track sets the mood in the paddock also. I do have great friends in motocross but here the feeling is more of a family one."

What's obvious is the fact that the EWC is seeing more and more riders migrate from the world motocross championship and while some of them are still very young, it seems like the move was a forced alternative for many. After exhausting all the possibilities of remaining in their first choice, most of these ex-MXers moved to the EWC after finding no contract with the MX teams and being presented, at the same time, with decent deals from the EWC ones. In the EWC, they found better guarantees to continue riding a dirt bike in the future. It's just the logical decision – as enduro riders traditionally stay in the sport for many more years than their motocross counterparts.

For Alex Salvini it just wasn't possible to find a place in a team with a competitive bike. "If a rider wants to win races in motocross he must be on a factory team otherwise he can't compete with the top guys. Not being able to get that deal in motocross, I ended up in a factory team but doing the EWC."

After starting in enduro with the Husqvarna factory team Salvini has stepped up and is now regularly competing for victories with the Italian HM-Honda squad and with no regrets. "I never again thought of the motocross championship – this is a new chapter in my life. I know how to ride a dirt bike and I just want to be able to do it professionally – be it enduro or motocross – it doesn't matter really."

"If I have any regrets, the only one would be not winning the MX3 title in 2010. For two years in a row I lost the championship due to bike problems so I still have that in my mind. I always consider myself lucky because my passion for riding a bike is also my job! Not >>



ALEX SALVINI

"At the first three or four races it was terrible... I made so many mistakes and lost so much time! After that, I built an endurocross-like test at my home and also adapted a natural one to practise as much as possible and now I'm one of the fastest riders doing it! Last year I did endurocross and got pole position three times – ahead of Blazusiak! No kidding, I really like it! It has that motocross feeling with the gate n'all!"



JOHNNY AUBERT

"The first time was incredibly difficult... I'm more used to them now but I still don't like them and I'm still not that good! But this is enduro and enduro is tough. Sometimes organisers feel like they should have some kind of Erzberg on the special tests though – it's all a bit crazy. I think they look at videos and decide to do it like that but they have to find a better balance. Enduro isn't like that – that's extreme enduro. I don't like the Super Tests. I mean, what is that for? A rider waits for a whole day to ride for one minute, in the dark, across some rocks... that's mental!"

ALIEN TERRITORY

Christophe Nambotin switched to enduro from motocross early in his career and has never looked back



MANUEL MONNI

"The first time I was complaining the whole time – 'what's this sh*t? I hate this!'. The truth is that after I started to practise focusing on those obstacles I started to enjoy it more because I got the feeling of accomplishment after going through really difficult stuff. So it's actually great!"



JEREMY TARROUX

"I just think that even some courses are a bit too hard between special tests. You can break the bike just by doing those! It's a bit too much I think – they're like a trials section! I mean, is that a normal enduro course or is it an extreme test?"



DENY PHILIPPAERTS

"My case is a bit strange... I usually go faster on the extremes and slower on the motocross tests [laughs]! I really can't understand why that happens! Maybe I'm a good enduro rider and I just need to practise more motocross!"

>> many people can say that. So, when I'm struggling and feeling less motivated, I always try to keep that in mind."

Hungarian all-rounder Kornel Nemeth started to ride EnduroCross almost by chance after being asked to fill a spot in a team at Montreal in 2009. The former KTM Sarholz team rider was already doing cross-country races after retiring from racing MX GP's the year before with a knackered knee. This was mainly due to the 'orders' of KTM Germany's main man – Norbert Zaha – but Nemeth recognises it as the right decision adding that he never really enjoyed racing at the GP's anyway.

Anthony Boissiere opted for enduro for different reasons. "I was always a 250 rider and when the rules in the championship changed so

I had to move to MX1 I never quite adapted to the 450 – although I did try! Changing to the EWC allowed me to ride whichever bike I want. I wasn't happy at all by the way things were going in motocross – riding was my job and my passion and not getting paid to do it was just not acceptable to me."

Johnny Aubert's decision to quit MX GP's was also based on financial reasons. "I had to stop motocross because while I needed to get paid to race, I was actually being asked to pay! In 2006, the Italian UFO Corse team invited me to come to enduro with a two year contract and a bit of money and I felt that I should give it a try. I don't forget my past in motocross, obviously, but I had 25 years of it so I must confess that I was getting a bit tired and needed some kind of change. Heading to enduro was the best decision I've made."

If motocross is the elite league in terms of earnings then what is it like for the EWC riders? The top factory riders say it's good as long as they remain competitive. Meo goes even further. "Not including guys like Cairoli, the average pay of a top level motocrosser is very similar to that of a top enduro rider and the best thing is that the quality of life you can have, as an enduro rider, downgrades in smaller increments compared to motocross." According to the former French SX champion, perhaps the worst situation a new rider to the EWC can find himself in is not earning any money in his first year but that will change in the following season.

That said, current Sherco factory rider, Jeremy Tarroux, could be the exception. "The first years were difficult. I only just had enough money to get by but after a good season I signed a contract with Sherco for two years so it paid off". Fellow Frenchman Loic Larrieu – who is competing in the Junior class – found it less of a struggle after landing a deal with the Husaberg factory team: "I don't earn much here for now but it's enough to make a living and I also have some bonuses, so that's not bad for a first year. I wasn't going to pay to ride in motocross and it seems that now it's only the top five riders who are getting decent money, with almost everyone below that having to pay to ride."

Monni, still remembers that in his better days in motocross he would get paid bonuses for his results. Although he now only has a regular wage, the good news is that he still has a chance of earning more after a good season – and the bonus of having more years to progress in his career. Deny Philippaerts still dreams of going back to motocross GP's but while he waits for better days, confesses that with the kind of results he gets for climbing rocks in enduro, he wouldn't see a single euro in motocross.

For TM factory rider Aigar Leok, the financial situation is quite comfortable. "I'm not earning enough to guarantee that I won't have to work for the rest of my life but just being able to ride motorbikes and get paid to do it is good enough for me – I can buy the diapers for my baby and food is on the table!"

THE MX FACTOR

WHAT TWO ESTABLISHED
ENDURO STARS THINK
ABOUT THE MXERS
ARRIVAL...

The arrival of motocross guys to the world enduro scene is not a new phenomenon and the sport itself has seen some changes because of it. At the start of the millennium enduros were generally held in very open areas, with fast, motocross-style special tests so it was clear that it needed some kind of change to rescue it from being labelled too easy. The creation of the extreme special tests and the return to proper old-school enduro tests helped to turn that around although it seems like things are getting slippery again...

Are the consequences of the MX factor in the EWC positive or negative? We asked two of the most experienced riders of the enduro world for their opinion on this matter and they couldn't be more different...

JUHA SALMINEN

"Growing up riding motocross is the way to go before coming to enduro. I think no rider starts to ride bikes as a four year old, already practising to become an enduro rider. I think that it's good that they come to keep the level up but it's not like they come for a year or two, win everything and go away. We have some good examples like Cervantes, Meo, Aubert or even Renet – it takes three or four years to develop within the sport. Once they reach the higher level their mentality should have already changed – they can't be the 'stylish motocross guy' anymore.

"Enduro on its bad days is not fun – if they don't really like the sport on those days then there's no place for them. There's no watering and there's no fixing the take-off of the jump. It really takes time to understand and get the experience to have the enduro-rider mentality but if a MX rider can handle all that then he should come and do it.

"I don't know if it's the arrival of more motocross riders that changed enduro. I think enduro changes because it needs those changes. I came to enduro in 1995 and I've seen all kind of changes. One of the good things about MX GP riders coming to enduro is that it attracts more publicity to the sport – the enduro people know them but the motocross spectators come to see them too. That makes the sport grow in visibility!"



Juha Salminen welcomes the motocross riders...

DAVID KNIGHT

"There were always motocross riders coming to enduro but recently the flow has increased – mainly because the MX world championship is pretty much f*cked up. Normal and even top riders can't afford to do it if they don't have the money, so we're all conscious of that when we see them coming, whether they like it or not.

"It doesn't bother me that the motocross guys come here. A lot of trials guys also come to enduro. The biggest problem for me is that some of them get here and they don't know anything about the real sport of enduro and try to change it! That's what I don't agree with.

"Enduro should be enduro. It has always been 'the man plus the bike' and he has to work on his own bike – now it has moved more and more away from that. Sometimes I think that Giovanni Sala – who is supposed to be the guy who checks the course – lost his bollocks. He goes out to check a special test but usually gets some of the motocross guys complaining that it is too difficult or too slow, so they actually change it afterwards so that it suits them. They're trying to change the sport of enduro to something that they would like and that's becoming more like a motocross qualifying lap, lately. It's not all of them but I can see things changing in that direction and further away from the sport that I fell in love with. The extreme test in Spain this year was like a motocross track!"

"The biggest problem I have – and I think that the FIM would understand this – is when we arrive on a Monday and the test is quite good and difficult but then we get to Thursday the test is completely different! Stones moved, rocks smashed using hammers, the lot... I need to hire the people who do this to come up and do my garden as they do a pretty good job of getting things flat!

"Myself and riders like Juha – even younger ones like Ljunggren – want the challenge of racing a real enduro! That's how I feel about it and I'm going towards more of the indoor events because the track cannot be changed! It's much less hassle and less expensive to do while getting more out of it. I love the sport of enduro and would like to be able to help to save it but if the FIM and promoters aren't willing to try also then I'm not bothered. I'll go and race other events where I can make a better living."

... while Knighter hates the way they're trying to change the EWC

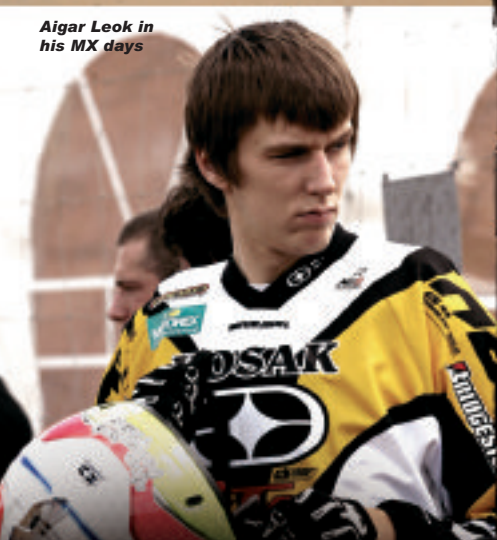




Antonine Meo back in MXGP action in 2005



Nambotin's an ISDE regular



Aigar Leok in his MX days

For a while in 2008 Anthony Boissiere was a real threat in MX2



LOOKING BACK

WHAT THE FORMER MX RACERS THINK ABOUT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS TODAY...

Some of the riders still miss motocross and some still follow it, although it seems like the overall impression is that something needs to change. We asked them to tell us what they really think of motocross today...

AIGAR LEOK

"I just think that it looks a bit strange that the main class has only 20 riders. It's not my problem anymore but I think that someone has to come up with some kind of plan now."

ALEX SALVINI

"I went to the Italian GP in Trentino and it was really bad. I mean, it was so bad to see that there were almost no riders behind the gate. Something strange is going on. Youthstream asks for so much money from everyone. Everyone has to pay – it's like a tax to ride! This is not a business, there's no other sport like this. The rider needs to take money, not to pay for riding. Top-10 in MX1 and top-five in MX2 have good earnings but below that there's a big difference. Sometimes I see that there are not even 20 riders behind the gate... I mean, what the fu*k is that? I never raced an MX1 GP without having to qualify – now everyone has a place in the grid! This isn't nice to see! It's always a good show to watch on TV, but at the same time it's sad, as the reality is not the same as before."

"In America there are always 40 riders behind the gate. You don't have to make a Super Final to fill up the gate. You have to change some rules to get those gates full. They're not changing it because they want to get

money from everybody. I think that the biggest mistake is from the teams because the teams don't say anything to Luongo. They don't change anything! If someone says what they think in the paddock – actually, if someone comments on the reality of what is going on – Youthstream take their passes! What the fu*k is that? Everyone speaks about it between themselves but no one speaks out! I think that all this is really bad for the sport."

ANTOINE MEO

"When I see the results in MX2 I just feel like closing the page immediately. I see that many good riders aren't the right age to stay in MX2 but then they also don't have the physique for a 450 so their careers are on a downward spiral now. They can do a national championship but it's like they're finished – take Aubin for instance. I definitely don't have the same vision as Mr Luongo for the sport. I just saw an interview with him in a French magazine, where he states something like, 'If the money isn't good, he's quitting motocross.' I mean, that says it all."

"I know of a young French kid who is one best 125cc riders around at the moment and he told me that he sees the world championship as an impossible dream. He told me that he's thinking about coming to do enduro as he sees it as a better thing for his future! That's not right! He's giving up already because he knows that at some stage he will have to pay to ride! And that would have to be his dad paying, not him! Luongo has destroyed the dream of many young kids

who wanted to be motocross riders. Can you imagine? Many riders in the motocross world championship are taking home nothing, or much less money than their bike's mechanic? And the rider is the one who's having to take all the risks, playing with his life. His career is short."

ANTHONY BOISSIERE

"The problem starts when a rider comes with a budget into the team. I could be a top-10 guy but if a new guy is top 12 and has money with him, the team takes him instead. It's just not possible to earn a living, like this. I just feel angry with the way things are going because of the 10-year-old that won't have any chance to reach the top in the future. He will miss the boat and never reach his dream."

CHRISTOPHE NAMBOTIN

"I like to watch them riding really fast but I don't like what I heard about the riders not getting paid. It's a dangerous sport, it involves a huge sacrifice and not getting paid to do that is just not right. This is a big problem in motocross now but it's also starting in enduro. In the past, the level between ex-motocross riders was lower than it is now. The top riders are going really fast now and it's not any ex-GP rider that comes and starts to get good results because in enduro too everyone is faster. I usually practice with Loic Larrieu and we talk about this. It's better for a motocross rider to start in the juniors because when they come to the senior classes the teams expect good results straight



Alex Salvini is stylish no matter what the setting



Ooooh Renet...



Leok was TM's factory MX racer before his move to the dark side

DENY PHILIPPAERTS

"In terms of its image I think that they're doing a great job. Motocross looks good! The problem is that they're not helping the young riders and the teams – anything you want to do in motocross, you have to pay for and that's not nice."

JEREMY TARROUX

"I started GPs in 2003. I was 16 years-old and I remember doing the qualifying and there were many riders getting prize money at the time. Now it's like MotoGP on dirt. I think that Luongo is a big problem for the sport. Everyone knows that but nothing changes. There are 10 or 15 riders who earn a bit of money with the top-five having top money and then some 20-25 riders paying to ride. In my last season, my team told me that it was good that I was riding faster than another rider but he would give them 50,000 to ride – maybe 80,000 – so if I didn't have that kind of money, I wasn't riding."

JOHNNY AUBERT

"Well, I'm an outsider to it now but I don't like this new motocross. I think that it's very difficult for the riders to find enough money and also for the teams it will be very difficult because they need even more money each year. When I look at it on the TV I can see that it looks nice but it's not the same for the ones involved. I come from the time when we used to get paid to ride so this situation is not normal now. I don't know why we can't have motocross like in the US. It's working well over there, so why can't they do the same here?"

LOIC LARRIEU

"Well, there's this situation that if a rider gets injured the contract doesn't mean anything anymore. There's no security whatsoever. The riders keep calling the managers, begging to take them into the teams but they don't have the money so they're getting nothing."

MANUEL MONNI

"Well, as an Italian, it's great to see a phenomenon like Cairoli doing well and promoting the sport in Italy but the problem is that not everyone can follow in his footsteps. It has become a very expensive sport and it's very rare to see really talented riders able to pay teams to get into it. It's looking very much like MotoGP – people with the right amount of money can just buy a place on a team and go riding, while the talented ones will never be able to have that opportunity."

PIERRE ALEXANDRE RENET

"I think that it is going in the wrong direction. All the young riders who arrive must come with a lot of money in their pockets to make the GPs. Before, it was possible to come with just your bike and van and try to qualify. Now you just need to pay the team and you're riding GPs! How cool is that? The age limit in the MX2 class is another stupid rule because there are some riders that just don't have the size and strength to ride a 450."

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JORDAN MOYLE

*THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PREMIX PRIVATEER IS 21-YEAR-OLD
PROPERTY TYCOON JORDAN MOYLE...*

Interview and photos by JP O'Connell

DBR: What's your weapon of choice?

JM: "KTM 250 SX. I raced Yamahas for the past few years but they were stolen over the winter so I thought I'd switch to a KTM as they're a lot more developed."

DBR: Why choose the two-stroke series?

JM: "I enjoy racing two-strokes more than four-strokes. I think it's because two-strokes are so erratic and light and it makes the racing feel more 'on edge'."

DBR: The two-stroke class still provides some of the most exciting racing of the weekend – why do you think this is?

JM: "As I said two-strokes are so light and erratic. The top runners like Moffat, King, Husband etc seem to be on the absolute limit. You haven't got the smooth power delivery of four-strokes so it's a bit more all or nothing."

DBR: What do you do for a day job?

JM: "Property management."

DBR: Do you have a boss that's sympathetic to your cause?

JM: "I like to think of him as a colleague rather than the boss! But yes as I work together with my dad we're in this sport together!"

DBR: Is the prospect of injury and time off work always at the back of your mind when you race?

JM: "I think if you worry about crashing then you're gonna crash! I've never really worried about missing work, when I lived in London I still got up at 6am to get the tube to work the day after breaking my collarbone but I suppose that's only a collarbone. Then again, should I ever break something more serious like a femur then there's not that much I can't do from

bed as most of my work is done via computer and phone."

DBR: How much time do you get to practice?

JM: "Probably one in every three weeks we'll take a Wednesday off providing we've cleared the work schedule. However as my bikes were stolen over winter I had no bike to practice on anyway."

DBR: What sort of cost is involved in trying to ride the full two-stroke series?

JM: "Time, effort and enough to have a summer holiday instead but it's worth it!"

DBR: Who does the spanner work on your bike?

JM: "Me and my dad."

DBR: As a privateer which is the MX related job that you dislike doing the most?

JM: "Cleaning the bike after a wet race."

DBR: If you were given £500 to spend on your bike what would it go on?

JM: "Suspension definitely."

DBR: Do you have a pimped up semi in the paddock?

JM: "Ha, it's on order..."

DBR: Which is your favourite UK track?

JM: "Whitby."

DBR: What's been your best ever result?

JM: "It was only the Junior class but winning the final round at Culham in 2011 was good."

DBR: What's your ultimate goal in motocross?

JM: "To do as well as I can. It's only ever going to be a hobby I'm passionate about which is

great because the only pressure comes from myself, the only person I can let down is myself, and the only person I'll ever have to blame is myself. Not big sponsors or mechanics etc..."

DBR: Would you rather go to the gym or KFC (other fast fat outlets available)?

JM: "Gym. Always."

DBR: Who is your biggest on track rival?

JM: "It's hard to say but it was Robbie Waller and Adam Harris above me on the podium in the Juniors last year. So I would say it'll be them but I think Robbie's on a 450 now."

DBR: If you were given the opportunity to ride a season for any team in the world who would it be and why?

JM: "Pro Circuit Kawasaki as their set up is second to none."

DBR: Any people you'd like to take the opportunity to thank?

JM: "Matt Hutchins at Evo-Tech for a lot of help and advice, Sol Gilbert at ZT gym for help and training advice but most of all my parents for all the support."

FLYING LAP!

THE QUICKFIRE ROUND...

Rihanna or Beyonce? "Rihanna."

Night in or night out? "Night out with the boys."

Cairolì or Stewart? "Stewart"

Blonde or Brunette? "Dark Blonde."

Brown or red sauce? "Red."

Tea or Coffee? "Coffee."

Ant or Dec? "No idea."

Saturday or Sunday? "Saturday."



JOHNSON JAMS THE HUGE DOWNHILL

Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Bearer Titulaire *Wife Femme | |
| Occupation Profession | CREWMAN, DESIGNER |
| Place of birth Lieu de naissance | BILLINGHAM |
| Date of birth Date de naissance | 9/2/47 |
| Country of Residence Pays de Residence | ENGLAND |

Usual signature of bearer
Signature du titulaire

Jack Burnicle

Usual signature of wife
Signature de l'épouse

(833735)





California Dreaming!

Full-throttle tales from So Cal's roughest, toughest and most infamous raceway – Carlsbad...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

Carlsbad is a sleepy Southern Californian retirement village nestling in a valley by the Pacific Ocean. It lies 87 miles south of downtown Los Angeles and 35 miles north of San Diego and its residents include sixties' tennis legend Rod Laver. But that Carlsbad, California is not the famous one. That was Carlsbad Raceway, situated at the end of a dirt road leading down a hill from a single roadside billboard. Not even a sideways glance through the strawberry fields would detect it. Yet for 14 invigorating years this Carlsbad hosted America's 500cc motocross grand prix, often in boiling temperatures and swirling dust and on dirt so hard tyres burned it black in the turns. Whoops, potholes, ridges and rills baked like concrete hadn't moved an inch in a decade and a half, despite copious watering that often left it mired in slimy surface mud during practice.

Carlsbad was a raw, spectacular Roman arena with no artificial ingredients added. It hammered up the undulating, brutal 'Carlsbad Freeway' and rocketed back down an insane, steepening quarter-mile, 10-storey descent into a radically banked left-hand bend. Europeans dominated the 1970s – German Willy Bauer, on a Maico, won the first US GP in 1973 before Suzuki's Flying Dutchman Gerrit Wolsink took a tremendous four on the trot. World champion Heikki Mikkola stole the 1978 race for Yamaha but Wolsink retaliated with a fifth and final hurrah in a 1979 heat wave.

Some Americans had glimpsed greatness – original Honda US factory rider Gary Jones briefly headed that first year, 'Rocket Rex' Staten led for 20 minutes on a CZ and Mike Bell (Yamaha) came close to victory in 1979's scalding 120 degrees Fahrenheit before suffering

heat exhaustion. Lancashireman 'Foamin Bob' Wright, lying 10th, actually fell just before weaving across the finishing line, crashing into the fence and collapsing, prostrate from heat exhaustion. The gritty CCM pilot 'died' momentarily but was revived trackside, packed in ice and rushed to hospital. Being Bob, he raced and scored a week later in Canada!

Then the Americans took over. Supercross techniques and tactics and later hard-riding El Cajon locals made the difference, though LOP Yamaha privateer Marty Moates was their first winner in 1980. Honda duo Chuck Sun and Danny 'Magoo' Chandler claimed the next two years before mighty Swedish hero Hakan Carlqvist put Yamaha and Europe back on top in 1983.

Broc 'Golden Boy' Glover became the first So Cal native to triumph a year later in a thrilling contest, one point ahead of Yamaha team-mate Ricky Johnson, who was in turn a point clear of Honda's Johnny O'Mara, with world champion elect Andre Malherbe just a further point back in fourth! In 1985 it was the turn of O'Mara's mate David Bailey, a convincing double winner ahead of Euros Dave Thorpe and Georges Jobe and one of the hot pre-race favourites when we arrived for what turned out to be Carlsbad's grand prix swansong on the final weekend of June, 1986.

Bailey's Honda sidekick was that other local hotshot, El Cajon's Ricky Johnson who grew up at Carlsbad Raceway and had dreamed of winning a GP there since he was a boy. 'RJ', eight days short of his 25th birthday, was dominating a revamped AMA season in which the 250 outdoor nationals ran concurrently with the supercross series until June. Newly hired by Honda, their team fresher had beaten Bailey to win both championships – now the factories >>

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JEFF WARD
LEADS RACE TWO

would shift their focus on to the 500 nationals that started a week after Carlsbad and Johnson would be after an unprecedented third title in one year. "This is the first time these guys have been out on 500s this season, except for a local race here last week and a couple of practice sessions," said Honda team manager Dave Arnold. "Their bikes are stock. That's AMA rules now. We figured they'd be good enough..."

Kawasaki entered their 'little and large' duo of slim, stylish El Cajon 19 year-old Ron 'Dogger' Lechien and stocky, dour Scotsman Jeff Ward who, though born in Glasgow, grew up in Southern California. Ward, a perennially gloomy bloke didn't really want to race Carlsbad but Team Green insisted. They parked their giant circus tent in a corner and encircled box vans round it like a Wild West wagon train allowing their riders to recline unmolested on lawn chairs in the centre.

Honda, in sharp contrast, backed their trucks right up to the wire mesh pit fence so fans could glimpse riders in their undies. Johnson loved it, handing out his iconic 'Life's a Beach' gear – especially the turquoise robot print shorts – to eager spectators. He also tested a new set of upside down Showa forks during practice but they clunked a bit on that downhill plunge and were discarded. The visiting Europeans featured four men in contention for a world crown, Honda trio Thorpe, Malherbe and Eric Geboers joining Kawasaki's Georges Jobe. Georges was running a new tubeless Dunlop tyre that could be ridden flat, but ran out of petrol during practice. It was a bad omen – he suffered two frustrating races.

Johnson and Ward leapt to the front of moto one and broke clear leaving Bailey to ambush Lechien at half-distance when Dogger crashed in 'The Horseshoe', a backmarker falling in front of the KX500. "I jammed my heel when I hit his bike," whined a glum Ron between motos before burying his head beneath a towel and taking a nap. But his fourth place was never in jeopardy as a tiring Geboers – not able to train properly because of an old knee injury – let Malherbe and Thorpe through with two laps left.

Reigning world champion Thorpe had never cared for Carlsbad ever since crashing hard on his first visit in 1982 and his nearest title rival Malherbe was equally unhappy. "I worried too much about making a mistake," groaned Andre who'd been third fastest in timed training right behind Johnson and Ward and ahead of Bailey. "I was loose and smooth in practice but as soon as the gate dropped I was finished," fumed the ex-champion.

The HRC trio actually holedshot race two, Geboers and Malherbe heading Ward, Johnson and Bailey for fully half a lap. Then the American freight train took over but Ward began to wilt, suffering arm pump on the harsh terrain, and Johnson jammed past on lap eight of 18, leaving Jeff to Bailey's mercy. Early leader Geboers lost fourth place to Malherbe on the final lap, with Thorpe a lacklustre sixth after Lechien had pulled out in pain. Jobe hauled himself through the pack to snatch seventh after getting his front wheel stuck under the starting gate. Up front an exultant Johnson won by seven seconds from Bailey to realise his childhood dream. "I'm glad he's not racing in Europe," winked Thorpe. RJ would subsequently lose a colossal contest for the 500 nationals, team-mate Bailey gaining revenge by six points – 273 to 267!

Carlsbad Raceway has since been built on as the retirement village expanded into that arid Californian countryside. But we still miss its obstructive security guards, stropo cops (who would arrest fans for daring to drink beer on site!), those cocky, suntanned – though allegedly sober – fans, that sticky, strength-sapping heat and daunting rock-hard blue groove. Motocross has never been more heroically demanding. It was a very special place.

Well Rounded?

ZACH OSBORNE ISN'T JUST A MOTOCROSS RACER - STEVE COX RECKONS HE MIGHT JUST BE THE BEST ALL-ROUND OFF-ROADER IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD...

Words and photos by Steve Cox

It's pretty much impossible not to like Zach Osborne. He simply has no quit in him and he's always pushing hard, whether through injuries (and he's had quite a few), being sent to Europe – because he was out of shape for racing in the AMA – and on and on. Most American racers in his situation would've quit rather than slug it out in the GPs away from home for half a decade but not Osborne.

Instead, Osborne took it as a challenge, just like everything else in his life. When he's cornered, he fights, but even he admits he has to be cornered first. "I'm the type of guy where everything has to be like my back's against the wall," says Osborne. "Like, even just to put my laundry in the basket my wife has to be down my throat or else I'm not going to do it. Maybe I'm a little bit of a procrastinator..."

This year's Budds Creek AMA National marked a milestone for Zach Osborne. Back in 2006 when he was the hot, new thing out of the amateur ranks for KTM, Osborne led the first eight laps of the first moto and had a pretty big lead then faded – without falling – all the way to 18th at the finish. He was fast, but he was chubby and out of shape and the only thing worse than someone who is slow and out of shape is someone who actually has the speed but not the work ethic.

"I think I went into Budds Creek this year with a little bit of a personal vendetta against that track. I really wanted to do well and just two crashes in the first moto kind of took me out of contention. But in the second moto I came through strong and passed some really good guys on the last few laps so it was kind of some vindication for me, I guess. But looking back, definitely now I look back and laugh at it, because I was so far from where I needed to be at the time [in 2006]. But it's good. It's been an

awesome road. It's been tough at times but I definitely feel like I wouldn't change it for anything and everything that has happened, happened for a reason. I just need to keep on trucking."

And trucking he is. Osborne grabbed a podium finish in Colorado at round two with a solid 6-2 score and currently sits fifth in the points behind defending National Champ Blake Baggett, world champions Marvin Musquin and Ken Roczen and team-mate Eli Tomac. Add to that his podium finish in Seattle this year and it's obvious that 'Snack Attack' is a thing of the past.

When Osborne was drafted into the GPs it was mostly because he's an American. The GP bosses are always pushing to bring American talent to the series since the USA's AMA series is considered by most to feature the fastest racers in the world. If not for this Osborne's racing career may have dried up or he may have had to test his merit in the AMA as a privateer. But because of his nationality he got an offer to race the GPs and he took it becoming a popular and relatively successful racer in Europe. After many years, he talked to teams in the USA about returning here but he didn't get any major interest because of supercross.

"There were a lot of teams that I talked to that were pretty interested but it was tough when they asked how good I was at supercross. I had only done a few supercross races in my career so it was hard to really answer that."

With the MX2 age rule Osborne was going to have to move up to MX1 if he stayed in Europe much longer and although that was an option for him to move up he preferred racing 250s. The only real answer was to come back to the USA and the only way to make that option a reality was to race some supercross. >>



"Well, there was actually one point after the 2011 season where I had an offer to come home and ride for a team in the States full-time for two years," says Zach. "But in the end, I thought if I could prove my abilities in supercross I could get a better deal so I worked it out with the team that I was on to stay one more year but I put it in the contract that they had to let me do four supercross races.

"They agreed. Obviously, they knew I was going to get married and I knew where I wanted to be so that was kind of part of my deal. So, I just worked with the guys at Ohlins in North Carolina and we put together some really good supercross settings. I basically just tested it from the ground up and just made it as good as I could make it on my own with one suspension technician – that was what we raced with."

After he warmed up at round one in 2012 with ninth place, Osborne grabbed sixth in Phoenix, and then snatched two consecutive podiums at LA and Oakland. Then, with his point proven – and his four-race supercross contract obliged – he headed back to Europe for the 2012 GP season with a ton of offers in the States for 2013 and beyond.

"Honestly, I'm not going to lie to you, I talked to every team except for Star Yamaha," Osborne says. But in the end, he knew he wanted to go to the GEICO Honda team. "Options I did have. But I had a pretty clear-cut goal of where I wanted and GEICO were on point straight from the start so we made it happen."

GEICO Honda loves Osborne's work ethic but they also said they wanted to bring a guy onto the team from the GPs so that they could get a fresh take on the AMA National tracks. "We always watched how Christophe Pourcel's line choices helped the Pro Circuit guys," said GEICO Honda tech Kristian Kibby. "We thought that would be cool if we could get that kind of thing going on our team."

"I can understand that," Osborne says. "But I don't really have that flair. I'm more just a bulldog. I'm definitely not the smooth Pourcel type. If I could pick anyone that I would want to ride like it would be Pourcel. But I couldn't be any more opposite than Pourcel. So, I'm sorry to burst their bubble but that's not me... [Laughs]."

And outdoors, even though Osborne rarely sniffed the exhaust of Ken Roczen or Marvin Musquin in Europe he has beaten them a few times already in 2013 outdoors including the second moto at the track where he had his vendetta, Budds Creek, where he caught and passed both Musquin and Roczen on his way to fourth in the second moto.

"I came around the first lap in 12th but I was further back than that," Osborne says. "I think I was maybe 15th or 17th, somewhere in there. I think I was in ninth with 5 laps to go. Then I passed Seely. I passed Ken [Roczen], Marvin [Musquin] and Wil [Hahn] all in one lap. And that was right at the finish.

"It's definitely gratifying for me," Osborne says. "I mean, to be behind those guys and gunning for them every year and never really be there to win championships – whether it be due to injuries, bike failures, or whatever, I just never was there. And now suddenly I came back to the States and I've been really close most of the year really. So, it's pretty cool for me. One of the guys on the team said, 'Man, maybe you should have been on Hondas in Europe, you'd be world champion now'. But oh well." Osborne's deal is through 2014 here in the States.

Osborne has ridden 450s really well in the GP environment, racing for Puerto Rico in the Motocross des Nations. But he didn't feel like he was ready for MX1.

"I wasn't really that interested to race MX1 there. Maybe later in my career but just not yet. I feel like I'm a better Lites rider. I don't really know. I'm probably a better 450 guy but I feel



Osborne's a serious threat to win an AMA National this year



more comfortable on a Lites bike. I don't know, I just didn't really feel like I was ready for MX1. That's a big step. And I recently got married at the end of last season and I felt like I needed to come back here, settle down a little bit and just chill. I have a long career ahead of me and hopefully I'm blessed with 20 more years. But at some point I would definitely like to go back to Europe to race MX1."

He actually could be racing MX1 now. "Yeah, it could have been a good deal for me," Osborne says. "I mean, I could have probably taken quite a bit of money and went with it. But I feel like I have a great opportunity here with GEICO and the way that supercross went last year I felt like it was the right decision." With US rules if Osborne can pull off a 250cc supercross title he could end up having to move up as soon as 2015.

"I've had a few years in the Lites class now so if I were to win the championship I think I would be pointed out so I would have to go to the 450," Osborne says. "It's funny how the Honda 450 here feels to me. I think there's something there. I like that bike a lot. But it's going to be a big

step. Honestly, it kind of scares me a little bit but I'll know when it's time to go because I'll be backed into a corner again..."

When the 250cc Western Regional SX series went on hiatus in the spring Osborne figured out a good way to pass the time – off-road racing. When most guys are taking time off to relax a bit, Osborne took on the Grand National Cross Country series here in the USA. At the first round in Florida he finished third in the XC2 Pro Lites class and eighth overall. Then he repeated that performance at the next round grabbing third in his class and ninth overall despite a first-turn crash.

"I actually feel like I should have won one of the two. I took myself out of the one in Georgia – the second one – in a first-turn crash. In Florida, I really just didn't know enough about the pace and when to push and when not to push to really get the job done. But I'm going to do some more, maybe one or two more at the end of this season."

That's how Osborne got an invitation to race for the USA in this year's ISDE on the



Charging hard is what Zach Osborne does best

World Trophy Team.

"Basically, they just called me up and asked me to be on the team," Osborne says. "I asked GEICO because it's a pretty big responsibility for me. It's like \$15,000 to race to get to go – between flights, hotel for two weeks, shipping crates and all that stuff. It's about \$15,000. So I had to first kind of financially set myself up for that. Then, I had to ask the team if it's something we can do because the bike has to be completely street-legal. It has to run for 60 hours in one week which is a pretty big ask. Also I had to get their permission to go. They said yes and I committed to doing it. Last week the team was announced and I was part of it."

It's going to require Osborne to work on his own bike during the event which it's pretty safe to say none of his contemporary racers would be able to do.

"I feel like I'm good enough, you know?" offers Osborne. "I can do basically everything aside from split the cases. I feel good about my wrenching skills. My mousse-changing skills are coming along and I've been practicing once or

twice a week just trying to get a little bit better. But I think we'll be ready."

He joins an elite group of racers who have competed in the Motocross of Nations and the ISDE. Stefan Everts has actually won both events. When asked if he knew of anyone else who had ever raced in both events Osborne says, "I don't know for sure but probably. I do know that no one has ever been on the GNCC, supercross and motocross podium the same year and I did that this year so that's kind of off the list."

"Last year, I was kind of in the running for the ISDE and wanted to do that and the Motocross des Nations – like skip the sixth day of the enduro and head to the Nations – but my bike blew up on a jump and I got hurt. That kind of put me out of the deal."

The ISDE may make his racing the Monster Energy Cup on a 450 kind of difficult though.

"Monster Cup is going to be a little bit of a pickle," adds Osborne. "I want to do it and I would like to have a 450 there but with the Six Days it's going to be like 10 days between those

two events and I don't know if that's enough time to really get a bike dialed. We'll see. It's something I'd like to do, though."

So, why does Osborne work so hard to do things like GNCCs and the ISDE while his competitors normally take as much time as they can off of the bike when they don't have to ride?

"Honestly, I just love to ride!" Osborne says. "I have fun riding still, everyday. I'm looking forward to the experience and it's always something that's appealed to me in a way – off-road racing. It's just kind of been my thing for a while now but I've never been in a situation where I can do it. But I'm all about it and the team lets me do it sometimes. As long as I don't take too many risks with it, they're pretty pumped on it. It's fun for me. I enjoy it. I try to go out once a week in the woods and just have a good time. So I'm definitely looking forward to the Six Days."

There's not currently another racer in the world who can go back-and-forth between supercross, motocross, and off-road at the top level or who would even be willing to try. He's grown a lot since his rookie season as a talented fat kid. |

**DIRT II
QUAKE II**

FLAMMABLE

OV AL INSANITY!

THE SIDEBURN CREW BRING TOGETHER THE UK'S ELITE FLAT TRACK RACERS, 12 CHOPPERS, CHARLEY BOORMAN, A MEAT AND POTATO PIE ON WHEELS AND DAVROS – LEADER OF THE DALEKS – FOR A NIGHT OF MOTORCYCLE MADNESS...

Words by Gary Inman Photos by Tom Whiting

When you are a niche motorcycle sport vying for the attention of would-be racers, new blood, sponsors and punters through the turnstiles, sometimes you just have to do things differently to make the tiniest blip on the radar.

That's just what the British Dirt Track community have done with their now annual festival of dirt oval insanity. Currently in its eighth full season, the UK dirt track – or flat track if you prefer, they're two names for the same sport – was attracting just enough competitors to keep ticking over but it was a hand-to-mouth existence.

Imported from the USA and launched in the UK by Peter Boast, a journeyman racer, road tester and race school tutor – the UK dirt track scene remains the most vibrant in the world outside the USA. But that isn't saying much. Entry fees paid by racers are enough to cover expenses and ensure the sport continues in Britain but there isn't much left over to grow or invest. Then came the Sideburn magazine crew (of which, for transparency, I'm one) with an idea of combining a Dirt Track Racers Association points scoring round with something far more inclusive and surreal – the result is an event called Dirt Quake.

The core idea of Dirt Quake is to encourage

people to race who don't currently have a suitable race bike, have never raced anything before, or both. An early realisation was that the event had to encourage novices to get involved with the minimum investment. Entry fees were pegged at £25 with another £10 to cover the day licence. Technical regulations run to three sentences and when it came to clothing, scrutineers would check helmets and insist on nothing more than gloves, long sleeves, boots and trousers. That's any trousers and Doc Martens if riders chose to race in them.

The organisers came up with three race classes all exclusively for road bikes. The thinking was, if someone wants to compete on a



Gary Inman behind bars



Chopper speedway has to be seen to be believed...



Travis Newbold came many miles to race at Dirt Quake 2



Tim Neave goes for the win in the Thunderbike division



Mad Max ain't got sh*t on this

race-ready or off-road bike they should sign up for the DTRA's popular Rookie division and go into the sport at a slightly higher and more serious level.

So, Dirt Quake class one was Street Tracker/Street Scrambler, and aimed at road bikes that look something like a dirt track race bike – stripped-down, small tank, skinny wide bars, fat tyres. Similar looking bikes on knobbles – like the Steve McQueen-themed desert race replicas that are currently in fashion, wouldn't be turned away, either. These are all bikes built for city streets, despite the origins of their styling.

Class two was the catch-all Inappropriate Road Bike class. If riders were brave enough to

race it, Dirt Quake was daft enough to let them.

The final class was included to bring people through the gate and create a memorable spectacle – the Choppers. Who wouldn't want to see a grid of 12 stretched low-riders, many of them hardtails with road tyres, doing battle for four heart-in-the-mouth, eyes-on-stalks laps?

Added to this roster is a pro stunt rider, a motorised meat and potato pie driven by a Swedish chef, a band that plays 1970s TV theme tunes between each heat and the most feckless pair of commentators known to motorcycling – one dressed as a policeman, in a uniform three sizes too small, the other made up to look like Davros, the leader of the Daleks. And it all takes

place at the Norfolk Arena, King's Lynn – a speedway track in East Anglia. Remember what Hunter S Thompson said – "When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro".

The day before Dirt Quake photos of vans packed with bikes travelling from France started appearing on Instagram feeds. Two riders had flown in from the USA, having organised bikes to race in the UK. The stunning Zaeta DT – a £12,000 TM-engined street tracker was coming from Italy for TV's Charley Boorman to compete on. One hero had fitted 17in knobbles to his Aprilia Mille 1000cc fully-faired superbike and was en route from Berlin. Another had shipped his bike from Spain to London, then rented a >>



DIRT QUAKER

Ade Collins is the man to beat in British flat track



Style. You've either got it or you ain't!

hatchback and stuffed the custom Honda 125 into the boot, on its side like a mountain bike, front wheel and handlebars sticking out over the back bumper. It seemed, for a small group of international nutcases, that it didn't matter how you got to Dirt Quake, just get there.

Before motocross. Before scrambling. Before the invention of the TV, back when the world was black and white and women's undergarments featured whale bone, motorcyclists got their dirt racing kicks on dirt ovals. They were dirt track racers. And while the bikes, the riders, the rules and the whole world have changed, the dirt oval remains the same.

Essentially and primarily a US-based sport, dirt track was imported into the UK seriously eight years ago. Dirt track is also racing in Australia, but it's their own mutation and run on knobbies, not dirt track tyres, so not the pure

sport. Before the lasting introduction to the UK there had been exhibition races in England, but not a full season's racing. Now a hardcore of around 60 riders compete through the season with another 40 or so occasional riders joining the fray when time, money and physical fitness allows.

As the Dirt Quakers, most of them novices and as green as anyone who has ever signed up for a race, walk around the pits, eyes wide and mouths curved into crescent smiles, the DTRA regulars get on with their heat races.

The DTRA racers are a mix of former road racers, motocrossers, grasstrackers, beach racers, speedway riders and a sizable chunk of people who had previously never raced any kind of bikes but were entranced by the whole On Any Sunday romantic dream and aesthetic. Most are attracted to flat track because of the relative

inexpense of both equipment and entries, and the friendliness of the no bullshit pits. If the DTRA was any more grassroots you'd need to mow it twice a week.

But that's not to say it isn't competitive. The top guys can be as vicious as the Russian mafia, strong-arming to the front. Some riders, like current champion, Ade Collins – one of the world famous Collins speedway dynasty – make the two-wheel drift and arcing powerslide look like a cross between a passionate tango and a pro snowboarder carving down a powder-covered mountain.

Good motocrossers normally feel at home on the dirt ovals pretty quickly. They just need to get used to having no brake lever on the bars – front stoppers are banned in this sport.

The fastest machines in the UK are modified Honda, KTM and Suzuki 450s. They're called

DIRT QUAKER



PC World with his fingers – and everything else – in a pie!



This is gonna hurt!

MORE INFO!

BRITISH FLAT TRACK ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
www.dirttrackriders.blogspot.co.uk
www.sideburnmagazine.com



Geoff Cain used to fire t-shirts out of a cannon at UK supercross events – how things change...



Waiting for the off!



DTX bikes – MX bikes modified for dirt track. The American AMA series introduced them in a hope to gain more factory support and sponsorship. It didn't work, but they're still being used. They are extremely affective.

To convert a motocrosser for dirt track you need to lower the rear end, often as easy as drilling a new hole in the suspension linkage dog bones. Next change the front end for sportsbike right-way-up forks (normally from a late-90s Honda CBR600 or Yamaha YZF-R6) in dirt track triple clamps. British company Co-Built make suitable triple clamps. Finally fit 19in wheels, front and back, with Maxxis DTR-1 tyres. The Dirt Track Riders Association realise that people don't want to invest in new wheels and tyres before they dip a toe in the water so they allow riders a one-off race meet using whatever wheels and tyres they have, MX knobbles or

whatever, to ease their way in. The knobbles work much better in some conditions, so this is a card novice riders can use only once.

There is another breed of pure dirt track bike racing in the DTRA – the framers. These are big air-cooled motors, commonly 600cc Rotax singles, in custom-made chro-moly twin shock frames. They attract the purist enthusiasts. In the right hands they're still very fast and competitive but much harder to get the most out of when compared to a 450 DTX machine. The framers have their own class, but can also race the DTX bikes if their riders are up for racing two classes in a day.

The DTRA racers battle in six-lap heats for positions in their evening's finals, as the Dirt Quakers look on to get a tentative grasp on the parabolic cornering lines and see which grid positions are working. The stands behind them

fill up as their date with dirt destiny nears. Then a rumble of dirty thunder rolls out of the pits and the first Dirt Quake heats get under way. Some racers decide to race in fancy dress, others in denim, others choose full eBay leathers in migraine-inducing 1990s colour schemes.

The heats come thick and fast. A Parisian who decides to race a Vespa is elbows-deep in its guts but still manages to get out for the next heat. The chopper racing is radical. A four cylinder Suzuki 750 in a rigid frame is doing lurid powerslides out of the corners. There are some big spills, but no one needs medical treatment, thanks to the air fencing in some cases.

But bigger than the crashes are the smiles. Sometimes racing forgets it's supposed to be fun. Dirt Quake taught a few people this fact and also reminded a bunch of others who might have forgotten.

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How often do you see mangled or kinked brake-hoses down at the track – particularly on some numpty's bike where he has routed the brake-line round the outside of the fork leg? Duh! Bad fitment aside, these items do perish or their outer, semi-rigid tubing can become brittle and crack through stone damage.

Few will realise just how much technology is invested into hose lines (they are not mere

tubes) and that the braiding is far more than outer protection. It is the essential, flexible casing that prevents the tube from expanding and, of course, the material has to be safe with brake fluid.

For good brakes, you need good brake lines. Damage done to them will result in reduced braking efficiency. Our step by step guide will help you to change your brake line and in next month's issue we will tell you how to bleed the system.

HOSEBEASTS!

THE SWEET WAY TO SLIP ON FRESH BRAKE
LINES WITH OUR DIRT BIKE BRAINIACS...

Words by [ROBIN BAYMAN](#) photos by [ANDREW WALCH](#)



01 Get the bike off the ground for stability and remove any securing clips that hold the brake line to the forks. It varies between models.



02 Before you end up splashing brake fluid everywhere, remove the master cylinder cap. These never need over tightening and should come off with ease.



03 Starting at the bottom, have an open-top container ready to catch the spilling fluid and remove the banjo bolt from the hose base. The top can then be undone the same way.



04 Slide the old hose from any securing loops on the front number plate or fork clamps and discard it. Avoid any contact between the fluid and paintwork - it will strip paint in seconds.



05 Slacken the brake perch and invert it to drain any dirty or contaminated fluids.



06 After deciding which is the top and which is the bottom of the new line, slip a new copper washer onto either side of the banjo. Old washers will leak!



07 Start at the bottom and secure the banjo bolt back to the reservoir. Ensure the faces are totally clean and the washers are in place. Tighten any other hose joints.



08 Look for any position-identifying indicators on the securing points. Here there is a noticeable step in the fork protector to match a step in the brake line.



09 With everything back in position, fill the master cylinder with fluid. Bleeding is essential, as air will be trapped in the master cylinder, yet gravity will help to identify your brake line is full.

dbr tested

*Fork tweaks make our
Toomer a dream to ride*



UPDATE!

OUR MX1 AND MX2 MAGAZINE MACHINES GET RIDDEN N' WRITTEN ABOUT...

Words by **Ged Walker** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

The fleet of magazine machines have been clocking up the hours in the last month. In the absence of Rob 'dirty business' Warner the little RMZ has been hitting the tracks in the very capable hands of young Luke Oldfield, racing a couple of local events as well as mid-week sessions at Marshfield.

The KTM 450 SX-F has been ridden by Tommy Crunch, Martyn Tucker, Tony Revell as well as my good self. The words and views of each rider on the bikes have been noted and things remain positive.

The KTM has had some much required maintenance lately as we had a weeping fork seal, a slightly loose engine mounting bolt and a damaged sub-frame bolt. The good thing about our test fleet here at DBR is the fact the bikes are ridden a lot so evaluation and information can be gathered and delivered to you, the reader. If there is a weak point on a machine we aim to locate it and communicate a solution. They might not always look perfect but we gotta get on with the riding sometimes.

The 450 is going so strong it is a pleasure to have it as part of our fleet. The bike seems to be bulletproof although we are not going to actually test that fact if you see what I mean. The orange machine has gone through a lot and simply keeps running stronger and stronger. In the words of 'Fast Tony' – "she's so fast Chap..."

We have positive plans for an awesome mag project with KTM's 2014 450 on yet another adventure at the very highest level of racing with 'out of the box' equipment. Apart from routine – and definitely not over the top maintenance – the biggest change to the KTM has been softer springing of the forks to suit the South Western tracks choppy nature. New .46 springs and 375ml of Motorex 5wt fork oil is the current set up coupled with the stocker shock and length from the slightly shorter Fox Shox unit.

The original set-up we were running

would work in soft terrain and woodchip but we like it a little old school sometimes so we have gone for a softer feel to see how it goes. Initial testing has gone well and Martyn Tucker is looking forward to racing a few different tracks with this more 'friendly' set-up.

We will be working on some re-mapping too as the KTM UK crew have sent down the mapping software. Lookout, Captain Tune Up's about!

The little yellow peril is running strong and is ready for a change as we have exhausted the bike as far as testing goes in its current stock state. The motor is running really strong and although the RMZ is definitely not the strongest stock motor available it does everything very well.

The '13 gearbox is still impressing all of us here and as they have been the weak point of the yellow brand for what seems like its entire history. The gearbox has taken a pounding from all of us and has never missed a shift. Positive and clean shifting is essential to get the most out of this bike and the new gearbox is slick and assured.

The forks are the area of change for the RMZ on the hard surface tracks. Forgiving ground conditions allow a chassis set-up to run with undetected issues. The Suzuki is running a 'firm' feeling from the front end and with some more testing I will locate the exact area where the feeling is coming from.

The stock fork which I raved about on the launch last year at Apex on a soft surface is not working as the tracks become harder. We are now at the softest setting on oil and preload levels from stock. The next step is the Suzuki Genuine Parts soft spring option. I am looking forward to stripping and setting up the Showas and hitting test HQ.

If the 'firm' feeling persists it will be time to look at the chassis stiffness for a new direction. Let's see what the next month brings – I think it could be a makeover for the RMZ.

PHYS ED!

IT'S TIME TO GET PHYSICAL WITH OUR MX COACH...

WORDS BY ED BRADLEY

It's the middle of the racing season and you're right in the thick of things. You've had good races and less-than-perfect races. You've done many hours at work and spent plenty of time with your mates. You might be loving a close relationship or splitting up with someone and, as all these things have been going on, have you flunked out of training or been busting out gym sessions comparable to the Incredible Hulk's workout?

One of the great things about carrying out physical exercise is that it is a stress buster. It's a great way of letting go of things, blowing off some steam, opening up the airways and breathing in fresh new life.

This is all well and good. However, what I have mentioned so far is all based on emotions and can de-motivate you or over-enthusiase you depending on how you are feeling! From a performance point of view, the questions I should be asking myself are – 'Is my fitness improving? How do I know I'm getting better?'

The best way to measure and improve fitness is to do a lab-based, maximum heart-rate fitness test, which allows your true training zones to be found, using your blood-lactate levels. This info can then be used to build an accurate training program and can be used to monitor progress in both training and performance.

The reason for discovering your maximum heart-rate is so that it is possible to work out your training zones. This can be used as a 'ruler' for plotting where your lactate threshold is and where it is going in further tests.

Let's find out what Lactate is and why it is important to you as an athlete. Lactate acid is a waste product that your body produces when you carry out strenuous exercise. When you are working in your aerobic heart-rate zone, your body can deal with the build-up of lactate acid by moving it away from your muscles. Aerobic means 'working with oxygen' – your muscles have oxygen to fuel them when you are working aerobically. As the build-up of lactate acid becomes too much for the body to remove, you move into your anaerobic zone, which means that your muscles are working without oxygen. When they don't have oxygen to fuel them, they start using the lactate acid for energy and it's downhill from there!

You may well have experienced going beyond your lactate threshold when you've been racing. Have you ever blasted out of the start gate and gone absolutely ballistic, ridden as fast as you can, used loads of body language as you muscle and fight your way around the race track at a hundred mph only to find out that, after a couple of laps, your body hits a brick wall and a juggernaut comes in crashing behind you? Have you experienced that feeling of there being nothing left in the tank while your heart is beating right out of your chest like the rpm of a piston in an F1 racing car? Now compare this to a practice day, where you go out and ride longer than your

normal race distance – you're riding more relaxed and efficiently, using less energy and, therefore, riding with a lower heart-rate...in your aerobic zone!

The trick is to use a training program so that the point where lactate acid builds up – and begins to affect your performance – happens as close to your maximum heart-rate as possible. That means you will be able to put more effort into your riding, for longer lengths of time, without hitting the so-called 'wall'.

The heart rate you choose to train at will depend on your current fitness level. For example, on Mondays I go for a run with Gert Krestinov who, as you can imagine, is a lot fitter than me. On our run I am at the highest point of my aerobic zone while Gert is at the lowest point of his sub-aerobic zone. Gert is almost doing a 'recovery' run and I'm doing a proper training session!

When you know your maximum heart-rate and your lactate threshold, by using a heart-rate monitor you can train to get the greatest benefit out of each session and get fitter much quicker. By doing things this way, your fitness will increase a lot faster than by going out to running club or busting out a session in the gym, when you're competing against your mate, as your egos do battle to prove which one of you is the fittest!

It's been surprising to find that, where we carry out our fitness tests at Blizzard Physiotherapy, the motocross guys tend to have something in common – they train too hard or, let's say, with their heart-rates too high. My opinion is that when you are racing out on the track, you put so much effort into your riding to do your best and this attitude is carried through into the gym. Riders put just as much effort, if not more, into their workout as they put into their racing, without realising that, in fact, they are over training.

I can also think of a few people who I know wouldn't even get their heart-rate high enough to improve fitness as they just plod through training sessions!

As your body develops and adapts to the stresses you place upon it, your lactate levels will increase, in relation to your heart-rate. If your lactate level is at 155 on your first test, the second test might show the level to be at 165 and it will become necessary to take another test to discover where your new heart-rate training zones are. The great thing about the retests is that once you know your maximum heart rate, there is no need to do the maximum test again, other than to find out where your lactate threshold is.

While it's fun to motivate riders to push themselves to the limit of their physical abilities – to watch them put in the maximum effort they can manage – it's another thing altogether to do it for yourself!





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BARN STORMER!

THE 450 KTM – THE MOST AGRICULTURAL MODEL IN THE FLEET –
IS THE FINAL BIKE TO BE FINISHED BUT WHAT A BEAUTY

Words by **Rob Bayman** Photos by **Andrew Walch**

*If you had x-ray eyes
would you really be
looking at dirt bikes?*



Of all the project bikes the 450 KTM is the most outdated model of the fleet – and not due to age alone. KTM have changed many areas of their bike range and, far from dragging their formerly-agricultural efforts kicking and screaming from the farm yard, KTM finally share similarities to the Japanese brands with whom they compete for race wins and market share.

For years on end, I have harped on about the advantages of subtle, yet unique, differences found only on European bikes – things like their high-level water pump. I thought it was right to have the pump positioned at a height within the coolant circulation parameters yet, against this, KTM have followed the design of their rivals and now it is positioned to take drive from the bottom of the engine. Did I ever have an argument, or has mainstream opinion prejudiced the unusual

position of any water pump? Everyone else thinks it should be located in the clutch cover.

Further back on the bike, the PDS (Progressive Damping System) which I thought worked reasonably well, has been phased out in favour of a linkage suspension for younger models. I guess the problem is that by accepting anything contrary to what the Japanese 'big four' are producing you're met with curious resistance.

Don't get me wrong here, I love all bikes and am neither pro nor anti-European models – I just see the Euro-manufactured bikes becoming 'Made in Europe' Japanese models. If they morph into the same bike, available in different colours, following another's technology and the rest don't follow suit, development gets abandoned. We as humans don't adapt well to differences we don't fully understand and our sport is a consumer led market. Never mind!

I still like my cravat, penny rounds and Cuban heels.

Progress, while essential, is the enemy of any recovery project. My 'Katoom' hoop and stick may no longer be competitive against the reverse-rotational-engine, fuel-injected missiles at GP level but that sentiment alone determines the bike's future market. If it's not the plastics, it's the gaskets. If not the gaskets, it's the piston. Or cables. And so on.

Just days before being dismantled and shelved in 2010, we had put a new ring set in the KTM. Again, this was a tricky affair, as our bike had a high compression piston fitted, which has a shallower ring than the standard. I must take ownership of that issue, as the former 'long-term test bike' had a few bits of 'exotica' supplied, direct from KTM in 2004 – I had simply forgotten.



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With any restoration or rejuvenation, plastics, graphics, tyres and a chain and sprockets transform a bike's appearance instantly and the KTM is no exception. The bike not only looks great but feels great – just those few items have a combined cost, typically in the region of £400. However, they only make a bike more attractive to the buyer, rather than actually worth more. We see good condition KTM 450s on the used-bike market, anywhere between £1400 and £2,800 but, get real! £2,800 for a nine-year-old bike that can't turn? In my opinion, asking anything over £2,000 for a nine-year-old bike, regardless of condition, is just foolish nonsense. You may hit the jackpot if Rich Idiot is in town, though!

Take this example. You wander into a bike shop with £2,000 wanting a KTM 450 and the shop has three to choose from. The first is a 2006 450EXC, sitting pretty with shining plastics, new tyres, recent chain and sprockets, looking like new. The tag says £2,000. The second is a 2006 450SX which has slightly-worn, aftermarket graphics that have clearly been raced with for a year, rounded knobs on the tyres but certainly enough tread to race and the chain is a bit baggy, but the sprockets are new. That bike is £1,850. The last is an all-original 2005 450SX which is looking a bit sorry for itself with mangled grips and bent levers, perished tyres, hooked sprockets, baggy chain, oily tail-pipe and the casings are eroded and flaking as the bike has probably been ridden and dumped, dirty, in the previous owner's garage and not touched for the last few years. The guy in the shop says it only came in yesterday, yet claims to have known the bike and its former owner. You are told it has done no more than a season's riding from new and the tag says £1,600. The chances are you will get that bike for £1,500 if you make an offer. So, which bike do you buy?

It's most likely you will pick the middle option

that looks right, has enough remaining service in its perishables to race straight from the shop and looks like it had been raced regularly. Plus you'll have saved £150. But for me it would be the final choice. In addition to the £400 needed to replace the plastics, tyres, graphics and running gear, it may also need bars, levers, disc pads, fresh oil and certainly a new filter, costing you another £100. Bike C, prepared to race, will absorb the whole budget will likely become the most dependable. Bike A may look the real deal but it could easily go 'bang' and cost significantly more than £250 to put right, as my later story suggests.

Bike B was like a bird on her first date – all made up to look like something it wasn't – its exterior possibly hiding something expensive just waiting to happen. Why was it for sale in the first instance? My own first experience of used-MX-bike disasters was so similar to the Bike B option. As a keen racer, back in 1987, I bought a used 1986 KX250 as I had sold my regular bike on a random offer, yet had already entered a meeting at Hawkstone Park the following day. That was at a time when only GP riders got to ride up Hawkstone Hill and I had yet to experience that thrill so I wasn't about to miss the opportunity.

I paid £600 for a year-old bike which seemed a bargain and rode it up Hawkstone Hill for my first time. On an unfamiliar bike, coming round for my second ever ascent of the most famous hill in MX, the gearbox let go. I had sort of known the seller – a friend of a friend – but knew nothing of his maintenance regime. I had certainly never thought of him as a crook – he was just a local rider who had retired. Or was he offloading a bike that looked great, but expected it to blow at any moment? It's a case of 'buyer beware' on used bikes – weigh up what you get and remember that presentation of a used bike

means nothing.

The RPM project bikes were slightly different. We had an idea about what we were letting ourselves in for, although both the YZ85 and the KX-F went over budget because we went over spec from plan A. We instinctively buy from what we can see and all like to think we know our stuff, yet if we had an idea of a bike's history or the former rider's ability, we could understand the pace it had been ridden at.

The superfast expert will have thrashed the guts out of everything and probably even stretched the frame but as the fast riders always present a pretty bike we presume they are good. The ignorant rider, who thinks bike maintenance is sprayed from a can or bolted on, often has little idea of how dependable his bike may be. Low usage on a bike often represents its value regardless of cosmetics. If it looks original and tatty, the chances are it is original inside and its condition is not reflected on the outside. Nothing is disguised to be anything other than what it is.

The KTM – well, let's face it – the bike is worth little but, pitching cost against pleasure, offers the most value of the fleet and is unlikely to sell at a loss. In bits it was just a £400 donkey, yet with a £300 Leo Vince slip-on tail pipe and £700 worth of other parts added the KTM is likely worth upwards of £1,600. It's the only RPM fleet bike representing the potential for profit. As you can see, it looks great and, as an entry-level adult bike, should be totally competitive. The riding experience of the fleet will conclude Project RPM next month.

Fancy recovering a competitive bike for yourself? Our experience would say to carefully select a cheap runner, add new tyres, plastics, graphics, bars and furniture to make it look up to date, replace the running gear, add a new ring or piston, service the suspension and brakes to make it safe and that's where the value lies.

BRAND RESURRECTION!

ADAM WHEELER SPEAKS EXCLUSIVELY TO SOME OF THE KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CREATING A NEW ERA FOR ONE OF THE OLDEST MOTORCYCLE MANUFACTURERS AND TO SEE WHY A FRESH DAWN FOR HUSQVARNA IN THE KTM NEST COULD BRING AN UNPRECEDENTED REJUVENATION...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

When news emerged that one of the most prestigious brands in motocross had been purchased by arguably the most powerful in the sport there was a feeling that Husqvarna would be coming back to its roots. Founded in Sweden as a weapons production plant over 300 years ago the company were one of the first to drive motocross as a technologically advanced motorcycle sport.

"Once I started looking into it then I saw they were one of the first three companies to make a motorcycle," reveals KTM Sport Director Pit Beirer. "In 1903 they were before Harley Davidson, before the Japanese and before KTM. The logo is like you are looking down a barrel because they were a gun manufacturer. When motocross was starting in America they were around Roger [De Coster] and that group including people like Torsten Hallman. There is tradition, history and a good name and that is where we will try to pick it up again and give new breath to this brand by taking it back to where it came from, racing."

"I had a chance to discover more about the brand that I did not know in such detail," says new head of Husky PR Paolo Carrubba. "It had been doing pretty good in enduro and there is an amazing history and heritage there."

It could be said that Husqvarna had lost its relevance and identity over the years. When the company was sold to the Italian Cagiva group (part of MV Agusta) in the mid-80s the Scandinavian flavour was diluted and this was reinforced as Italian Chicco Chiodi won the last of their motocross FIM World Championships in 1998-99 (125cc).

"There is an Italian connection for perhaps the last 25 years but the story

starts well before and we'd like to consider it very much a Swedish brand," says Carrubba. "There is 110 years of history that starts from that country. There is a very pure spirit towards motocross and from the beginning those guys were studying, developing and producing real motocross bikes and there is a heavy link to the U.S. racing scene and that is one of the things I like more."

BMW then famously took control in 2007 while KTM were across the border in Austria and building up the Husaberg brand. Husaberg was an off-shoot of Husqvarna as the original technicians that remained in Sweden after the sale to the Italians started their own project and enjoyed success with Joel Smets for three years at the top of 500cc Grand Prix racing. Husaberg was a minor but noteworthy enduro specialist element for KTM. This year, with KTM CEO Stefan Pierer acquiring Husqvarna as part of his Pierer Industrie AG group, the division between the two 'H' companies has been mended.

"The experience with Husaberg for a second brand based on overlapping the main brand is something adapted from the car industry in using the platform strategy; to share engine and chassis components as much as you can," says Pierer. "You don't need additional R&D, purchasing and production. All is the same. After 10 years I was 100 per cent we could handle a second brand and then the possibility came up with Husqvarna."

"The situation arose with BMW where the company recognised they needed to focus with on-road through the crisis and they would get rid of off-road. We always had a clear plan in advance what we would need to do and that would be to create a single brand so Husaberg will be merged and will disappear and Husqvarna will be

the strong global brand for the future."

Understandably the questions now start. How will a firm so renowned for racing success in the present day begin to resurrect one that set the mark in the original era for motocross? Will we see essentially a new fleet of 'white/red KTMs'? Can Husqvarna be relevant once more after a generation of fans, riders and kids have come to associate the machinery with uncompetitive and insignificance? These are the issues that KTM are tackling, but as you might expect the Austrians have their plans.

"Every project started by my boss Mr Pierer moves very fast, so this ball is moving very quickly down the hill," explains Beirer. "We have this luxury that our main teams now are established in practically every discipline and that gives us some freedom to look at other things. Husqvarna is new but gives us a lot of work in terms of analysing what has gone on with the brand over the years and see where we can do it differently to do it better. If we cannot do it better than those before then we should not even start."

"We have to start again, that's for sure, and we have big plans for racing which has that important link to the youngsters," offers Carrubba. "I think this will be the first big help to bring the brand back to the new generation. Then of course Husky has the heritage that will appeal to the 40 year old 'boys'. We want to somehow keep this part of the brand."

KTM recently announced their racing ideas – appropriately at the Grand Prix of Sweden – that will see two of their principal motocross satellite teams converting to 'white' already for 2014. Beirer divulged some of the details and reasoning prior to the landmark announcement at Uddevalla. "We are talking to IceOne to run the MX1 structure and Jacky Martens for >>

Stefan Pierer has a clear vision for Husqvarna's future and with his track record surely it has to be a successful one



the MX2 and this is the route we want to go. Kimi [Raikkonen, Team Owner] the 'Iceman' on one side and being able to give back that Nordic taste to Husqvarna is a nice link and Jacky was the last Husky 500cc world champion in motocross and another circle will close there.

"Jacky has made great work for us with young riders and sometimes we have been unfair because he had Jordi Tixier and Jeffrey Herlings and we [the factory team] took them away from him so it would be unfair just to rate him by results. It would be great to give something back for him to stand alone and then stop stealing his best Husqvarna rider away!

"Another important decision is that the bikes will start with 65cc. We will have small bikes and we will start immediately with a junior programme and have kids on Huskys. We want to open a new road now and not just halve the power of KTM."

With these set-ups 'leaving' the KTM camp

the Austrians will face a distinct decrease of presence and narrowing of their talent filtering process. However, knowing the commitment KTM place towards the sport is it hard to imagine other squads will not step into the void and seize the chance of technical support.

"Maybe now it is a little bit too much and we never planned to control the whole paddock," confesses Beirer. "That was never even a thing of dreams – we just wanted to win. We pushed so hard and we try to make the product better. We now have the results and the charisma around the team and people are looking at us and they want to come here – the satellite teams want to run KTMs. It is a bit self-running now and it will not hurt the world if there is a bit less orange and some more Husqvarna.

"I know some people are already getting tired of the KTM wins," he adds. "It is too big, too orange and too good. So to try something with a different brand is exciting. The reality

today is that there are 10,000 sales of Husqvarna and 110,000 of KTM so we should not go too crazy and blow it up. That's why the investment of riders and teams needs to stay a little bit in balance against the KTM show.

"We are going into this with the same motivation that we had before and in terms of logistics this means new people and new partners," continues Beirer trying to shed some light on the upcoming development process. "We want to build up something that is way smaller than what we are doing right now with KTM because of the size of the company and the sales of the motorcycles at the moment. We must stay realistic. The first, second and third thing you must do if you are trying to construct something with quality is start off with quality... and not make compromises.

"You always picture it [a new racing project] with your main partners first but there is definitely a second road for us there. We are not



FACTS AND FIGURES!

DISSECTING THE SWEDISH BRAND...

- The motorcycling division was born in 1903 and the first (Belgian-made) engine produced was able to output a staggering 3mph
- The forefather of racing prowess was a technician called Folke Mannerstedt and his arrival in 1929 led to increased performance potential on the two-stroke technology and road racing success. They won the Swedish Grand Prix and even the TT.
- The Silverpilen and Drombagen motorcycles were the eye-catchers of the post-war period and Husqvarna went on a run in motocross, enduro and supermoto that eventually led to 82 world championships across the disciplines.
- The company has been based in Varese since the 1987 takeover. After 10 years in Italian hands it was bought by BMW in 2007.
- Some of Husqvarna's renowned motocross world champions include Bill Nilsson, Rolf Tibblin, Torsten Hallman, Heikki Mikkola, Hakan Carlquist, Jacky Martens and Alessio Chiodi.
- Movie icon Steve McQueen was famously pictured riding a 400 Husky topless on a 1971 Sports Illustrated cover.



As a genuine off-road enthusiast Paolo Carrubba is the ideal man to head Husqvarna's PR team

Red Bull

special feature

Pit Beirer's life is about to get even busier



obliged that everything will be the same and just 'copied over'. We'll start from zero, let's say, and we need to create a different line and we'll use the synergies where we can. The R&D department head is the same and racing will be the same. I'll be the head of this story and it will all be linked to the racing department. I will make sure that it runs in the same system as all the other boys, so for sure you will see a lot of similar steps that you would expect from us."

Will this mean Husqvarnas will essentially be off-shoots of KTMs? It would seem so. It is ironic considering the innovations of the past when the Scandinavian's two-stroke development helped snare 14 world titles but in the modern era with motocross bikes so similar in terms of performance, perhaps now the reputation for pioneering is not as fabled as it once was. Experiments in off-road did not work for Aprilia (the twin) and BMW and neither company compete on the dirt any more. Like KTM stress, shared technology it is both a formula necessary to chase success on

the track and one that ensures that Husqvarna will not sink again. "In the market the brands are separate but behind there are synergies and that is the only way to survive on a small scale and in this competitive industry," says Pierer.

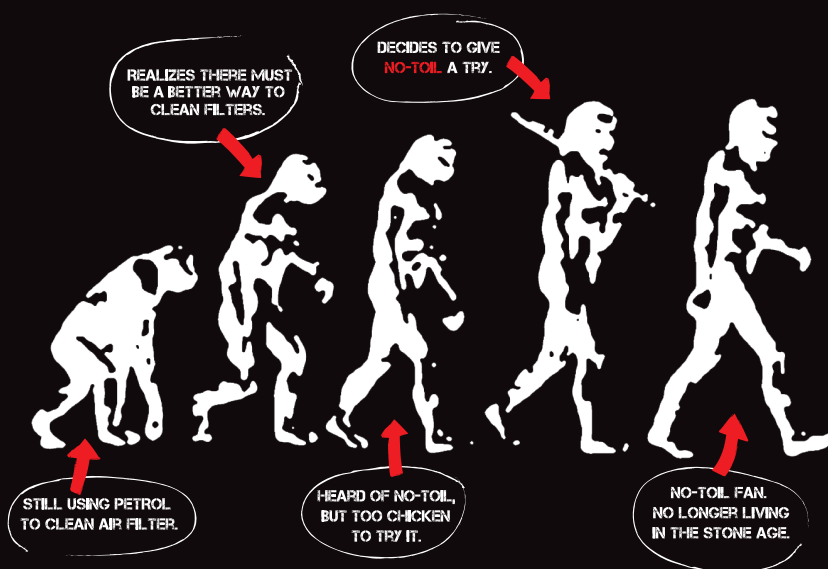
"Let us work for a couple of years and I would say in three or four you will see a different Husqvarna motorcycle," argues Beirer. "I will guarantee that people will look at it as a quality motorcycle brand and today there are too many question marks around it. I want to delete them and produce a decent bike at the level of a KTM but with its own identity. It is obvious that at the beginning it will start off being more like a KTM compared to later down the road because we know what we know. If we know that this drive train works well then we will not create a different one just to be away from KTM – the identity needs to develop over the years."

There will not be a tentative approach either it seems. Expect a full compliment of Husqvarnas to hit the block in a matter of months. "For

motocross we will use the KTM platform and you will see at the EICMA show [November in Milan] that we will have a very strong competition line from enduro and every displacement for motocross – meaning 250, 350 and 450, two-stroke 125 and 250 and all the models that Husaberg had for Enduro. Including a bike with the 690 single cylinder," reveals Pierer. "It is a perfect model line so the dealer can survive in the off-road segment. That gives us the chance to have a second distribution line against the Japanese. Husqvarna is strong on a global base to be able to attack the Japanese or to lift the Europeans against them – that is the concept."

With bike sales in Europe still making for depressing reading it is easy to be sceptical about KTM's ambitions. A company that has grown in market share considerably, that it is now selling out street models and shifts over 110,000 units a year and turns over 700 million euros being able to succeed where a giant of the automotive industry, BMW, was not. Is it >>>

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possible and how do our protagonists view the slippery slope that Husqvarna has been trailing and why BMW were not able to make an impact? "Good question but tricky because we cannot consider one aspect," opines Carrubba. "If we consider only the racing this is not the right approach because you have to look wider. There were many decisions from the product to the sales policy that did not work."

"I don't know how I can rate that, but I think in the company the passion for off-road was missing," comments Beirer. "They have other, different and bigger projects and were looking to cars and Formula One not necessarily enduro and the dirt. I felt that the passion was missing from a wider range of people. For sure there were single guys who wanted to make it happen but they didn't get the support necessary to succeed. In terms of knowledge, power and investment there is no doubt that BMW should have done it and we had a lot of respect when they stepped into enduro at the first level."

For Pierer, 21 years heading up KTM, it is a bit clearer why the new investment will succeed. "Because of 20 years experience in the off-road niche market and industry. It is a very specific one and you need experienced people – the former racer here, the skilled and knowledgeable technicians there. Every small detail with hard and consistent work creates the right product. Secondly you have to understand the off-road community. It is a closed community and if you are not part of it then you are making a mistake."

At least with KTM, off-road business remains at core. When Pierer explains that the company was one of the strongest to emerge from the financial crisis thanks to an aggressive and proactive approach to developing and fabricating motorcycles it is hard to disbelieve. Talk to any motorcycle dealer and brands like KTM and Triumph are those that are thriving by offering variety and choice. The market might be flat in the traditional territories but these brands are scooping up a bigger share of it. Overall there is an overwhelming sense that if Husqvarna cannot flourish in these new surroundings then it is doomed to disappear into the annals of the sport and pastime where so many names and logos once loved have vanished.

"The history of the motorcycle industry is like this," adds Carrubba. "When I was a child we had so many brands in Italy and not many of them are alive now. I don't know if it is about changes and modifications or evolution through growth but there doesn't seem to be one 'rule' for why this happens."

So, in summary, a potent new race programme, plans for an extensive off-road line-up to be unveiled by the end of the year and care-takers that certainly know their place, sport and market – Husqvarna looks set for an epic new chapter.

"I'm sure we can refresh the brand and bring back the racing spirit," enthuses Beirer. "People will think back to founders of American motocross and Steve McQueen on a Husky as well as several world champions – we want to bring it back down that street."

"We are very excited now, especially when we think about the new model programme," says Pierer. "For us in Mattighofen that means 15,000 additional bikes based on the same platforms."

"If somebody knows KTM a little bit then 'slow' is not a word we like," says Carrubba who spent several years in orange before transferring across. "It will be very big but for sure there needs to be a bit of settling in and we are already going through that. It will be very nice to see Husqvarna racing again in the U.S. and you will see some interesting stuff coming up for overseas. The U.S. market is one of the biggest and needs to be approached and part of the racing history of the brand."

special feature

Romain Febvre is the first confirmed Husky signing



COMEBACK KINGS!

THREE GLOBAL GIANTS THAT MADE IT BACK EVEN BIGGER AFTER BEING ON THE BRINK OF DISASTER...

APPLE

In the late 1990s Apple appeared to be a company about to go bump as its home computer offerings seemed to be becoming more and more unpopular. Then came the iPod which more or less completely turned around the company's fortune. With a portfolio of uber-trendy products such as the iPhone and iPad it's not unusual to see people lining up for hours to get their hands on the latest versions of Apple products before anyone else.

MINI

When the original line of Minis was discontinued at the turn of the century everybody thought that was the last we'd see of the iconic small cars. But then BMW brought out re-released a version of the Mini Cooper and they suddenly became the thing to have for

hipsters who were also worried about fuel consumption. The BMW tag obviously helped also making the Mini Cooper something of a status symbol albeit at an affordable price for the masses.

NINTENDO

Games like Excitebike made Nintendo consoles very popular in the mid-80s but just like leg warmers, fingerless gloves, parachute pants and oversize tops Nintendos soon fell out of fashion leaving the Japanese company's execs wondering what to do next. Fortunately Shigeru Miyamoto and his team came up with a radical new gaming system called the Wii that suddenly made console gaming a family-friendly instead of lone experience and Nintendo was suddenly cooler than the underside of your pillow once more. Boom.

IRON FIST

*GRIMBO FINALLY GRABS THE WIN
AT THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST ONE DAY
HARD ENDURO - AND HE EVEN DOES
IT FROM THE SECOND ROW...*

Words and photos by **Future 7 Media**

Erzberg wouldn't be Erzberg without a little controversy. If it's not someone reckoning that someone else has been pre-running the course, then the 'gotta be riding orange to win' conspiracy theorists are quick to have their say. No matter what the pre-race drama Erzberg is always exciting, unpredictable and brutal, in equal measure.

This year Erzberg was all of those things and more. It snowed, it rained, it was won by a Husaberg rider. And the Hare Scramble started in Austria's newest lake. It was crazy – everything that Erzberg normally is, just crazier.

The fun and games began right before the event started. Good weather turned bad and soon after turned all Christmasy. Expecting the unexpected is part and parcel at Erzberg but snow one-day before June was something no-one was anticipating or pleased to see.

The snow did a number of things. It made the place look pretty. It made it as cold as hell. And it meant that all riders would get just one qualifying run up the mountain, not the usual two. The event's fastest riders arguably got the worst of the conditions, setting off at the head of the field. At the time no one knew that it would be a one-run-for-all prologue.

Qualifying on the front row is a big deal at Erzberg – it's what all top runners aim to do. It's what Graham Jarvis failed to do. With his prologue run a little too steady Grimbo missed the front row by two places. It was big news at the time.

But 2013 was the year that starting from the second row wasn't a disadvantage. Watching as many of the riders he feared he may not see until the end of the race drowned their bikes right off the start, when it was his turn to start Graham throttled off until well clear of the first corner, motor-killing,

water hazard. Then he hit overdrive and did what he does best.

It took a while for Graham to hit the front as Germany's Andreas Lettenbichler lead early on from Ivan Cervantes. But Jarvis was on the move – soon inside the top 10, helped by the fact that Jarvis, Lampkin, Ben Hemingway, Paul Bolton, and more had drowned their bikes.

Once Jarvis started making his way forward there really was no stopping him. With Jonny Walker having a 'nightmare' of a race it left Graham free to steadily but surely pull away at the front. Putting his ruthlessly efficient technique to good use, once the race passed the mid-way point it was clear it was Jarvis' to lose.

This time around the 'nearly man' got the job done. Winning by more than 18 minutes he finally added an Erzberg win to his long list of Hard Enduro successes. The nearly man became the man...



erzberg 2013



© Philip Platzer/Red Bull Content Pool



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FLOODED BIKE

The start of the Red Bull Hare Scramble was crazy. Riders were drowning motors left, right, and centre, with many of the expected podium contenders caught up in the mayhem. Dougie Lampkin, Ben Hemingway, Lars Enockl, Paul Bolton, and Jonny Walker were among those that ran into trouble. For some it was game over!

IRON GIANT

When you see it like this you realise just how bonkers Erzberg really is. Shortly after the start riders did a little gravel road racing as they made their way out of the bowels of the quarry and upwards towards the start of the race proper. Following the insanity at the start, for some simply making it up the first half dozen hills was a major achievement.



BEN HEMINGWAY

If you're not prepared to roll up your sleeves and get on with it at Erzberg you ain't gonna achieve much. Fighting his way back from a drowned start Ben Hemingway took Karl's Diner in his stride and blitzed his way through the world's longest rock section. Who knows what Ben might have achieved if he'd not drowned his Beta!



WINNER, WINNER!

Jarvis can rest easy now he has an Erzberg victory to his credit. Following three years of exceptional performances, mistakes, conspiracy theories, and disqualifications, the Husaberg rider finally nailed it. Once in his stride there was no stopping Graham, who has now topped each and every one of the world's biggest, and toughest, Hard Enduro events.

TOP 3

'Congratulations on finishing top three at Erzberg. Here's a can of Red Bull, a souvenir flag, you'll get your trophy later...' The spoils of winning, or finishing, at Erzberg are nominal. But that's not why these guys do it.

START HILL

One...two...three...four...five... the number of riders that drowned their bikes at the start increased every time another row of 50 was flagged away. The shallowest water was to the left of the first hill, the deepest to the right. Making it through the water was one thing, reaching the top of the first climb, especially with no run-up, was an altogether different story.



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WADE YOUNG

Along with Ivan Cervantes, Wade Young was another Erzberg first timer competing this year. The young South African made it home in 11th, and added another Hard Enduro finish to his resume.

DOUGIE LAMPKIN

The high-speed prologue isn't exactly Dougie's favourite part of the ErzbergRodeo, especially when it's snowing. This year's qualifying event was like no other as an unexpected dumping of the white stuff turned the Erzberg mountain into a winter wonderland. DL did what he needed to do and got himself a front row starting position.

JONNY WALKER

Rounding the first turn in the lead is normally a good thing at Erzberg. It was just about the only good thing as far as Jonny Walker's race was concerned. Taking water into his motor he went from first to god knows where in an instant – effectively ending his chance of a second win. Jonny charged hard yet just fell short of a podium result.



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PAUL BOLTON

Bolts completed all of about 150 meters of this year's Hare Scramble. Better prepared than ever before, and hungry for a top three result, the former podium finisher's bike stopped shortly after the start and that was that. Roll on 2014 and Erzberg's 20th anniversary.

ANDREAS LETTENBICHLER

Letti knows better than most how cruel Erzberg's Red Bull Hare Scramble can be. He's experienced more than his fair share of bad luck over the years but this time around things worked out perfectly for the likeable German. Second to Jarvis was 'as good as a win' reckoned the Husqvarna rider. Letti didn't put a foot wrong.

erzberg 2013

Bolts' race was over before it began



RICHARD ELWOOD

25th fastest in the prologue, Richard Elwood made a great start in the main event and was one of several Brits to fall just short of making it to the finish within the allotted four-hour cut off. Making it to check point 16 Richard was officially credited with a 20th place result.

IVAN CERVANTES

Two things Ivan likes more than anything are sun and dry terrain, preferably littered with jumps. Ivan got neither of those two things at Erzberg. Making a first visit to the Iron Giant, Cervantes qualified well and then held second during the early stages of the race. He ran into a few troubles, as you'd expect being an Erzberg rookie, but he battled to a creditable eighth place finish. Next up for Ivan is the Red Bull Romaniacs!



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RED BULL HARE SCRAMBLE

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1 | Graham Jarvis | Husaberg | 2:01:06 |
| 2 | Andreas Lettenbichler | Husqvarna | 2:18:46 |
| 3 | Alfredo Gomez | Husaberg | 2:27:26 |
| 4 | Jonny Walker | KTM | 2:28:20 |
| 5 | Ben Hemingway | Beta | 2:37:10 |
| 6 | Dougie Lampkin | Gas Gas | 2:56:18 |
| 7 | Taichi Tanaka | KTM | 3:05:40 |
| 8 | Ivan Cervantes | KTM | 3:07:22 |
| 9 | Alex van den Broek | | 3:41:59 |
| 10 | Pierre Pallut | | 3:43:24 |
| 11 | Wade Young | Husaberg | 3:44:42 |
| 12 | Lee Sampson | | 3:50:46 |
| 13 | Dan Hemingway | Beta | 3:52:51 |
| 14 | Philipp Scholz | KTM | 3:53:55 |



SUNDAY MORNING

The paddock area is normally a hive of excitement and pre-race action. Not this year. It wasn't snowing, which was a relief, but it was raining. It rained all day. It was also cold. It wasn't somewhere many people wanted to be!

TAICHI TANAKA

For a little dude Taichi Tanaka hauls. Last year he smashed his bike to pieces, yet still managed to finish. This year he knew what he was letting himself into. Finishing seventh, thanks in part to a helping hand from Dougie Lampkin, Tanaka was the first non-European to make it to the finish.

SPECTATORS

Visibility wasn't at its best for Friday's prologue. Snow fell on the lower parts of the quarry for the first time ever, and even the Austrian's were asking what the hell was going on. Only the hardiest of hardy souls dragged themselves up the mountain to watch the qualifying runs.



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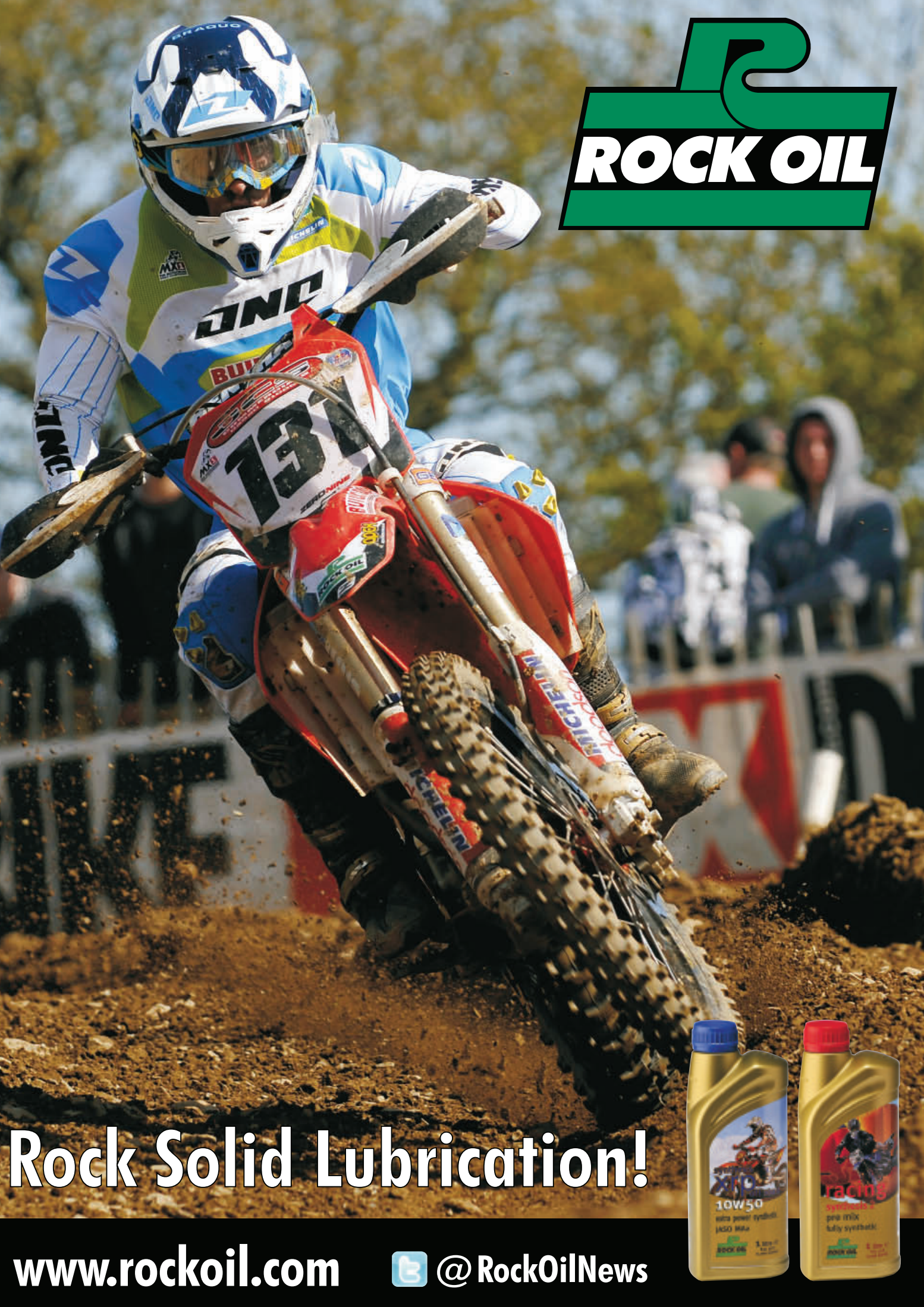
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CULHAM CRACKER!

THE BRITISH YOUTH NATIONALS HEAD TO CULHAM FOR ROUND TWO...



Jed Etchells tries to break Tom Grimshaw



Jack Carpenter leads this 65cc encounter by the Thames



Harry Kimber gives it beans

With the Culham circuit well prepped, ably managed and then ultimately riding just about as good as it gets round two of the ACU British Youth Nationals hit the sweet spot. With a further sprinkling of top talent turning out in Oxfordshire racing numbers were slightly boosted and series organisers RHL are hopeful for even better returns for round three at FatCat in July.

In the 65cc class newcomer Jack Carpenter left the watchers in absolutely no doubt about his ability as six terrific heat wins were chalked up in his impressive overall victory. Lewis Hall claimed second overall together with the other race win and he finished no lower than third over the seven race weekend and so also retains his series lead. Others making the Junior headlines with podium class heat returns are third overall man Reece Martin, Irish contender Jack Galvin and Husky mounted Curtis Trimble. Joel Rizzi was also on top form carding a couple of seconds – however, one blank score for Joel spoilt an otherwise good weekend.

Tom Grimshaw and Christopher Mills also made their series debut in the Smallies and together with Harry Kimber, Jed Etchells, Dylan Woodcock, Nathan Claughton and Callum Green all put on a super quick close quarters show at the sharp end. Just how close was perfectly shown in heat two with just over a second covering first to sixth on best lap times. At the conclusion of seven electric heats Manx torpedo Etchells won it overall by one single point – this even though he never actually crossed the line first. Kimber won four times, Mills twice and Grimshaw once. All totalled Kimber now takes over as the new section leader.

At the conclusion of an evenly matched classic two day tear up arguably all there was to choose between B/W series leader Jay Hague and series entrant Mitchell Lewis was one poor start by Hague in heat one. Lewis nailed four heat wins, three seconds and the overall in what some claimed was his best performance of the year. Hague notched up three wins and three seconds but with that poor first race fifth on his card he had to settle for podium second. Third place on the box went to Albie Wilkie as he put together a season's best set of results.

Laying down a Saturday show that was possibly the best of his career Jack Kelly tore into the youth Open section as if his life depended on it. Kelly was almost three seconds a lap quicker than the next best in qualification and ultimately converting his speed advantage into four cracking day one wins. Suffering from blisters on day two Jack took it relatively easy (going 2-3-3) on his way to section gold and the championship lead.

Scot John Adamson continued his impressive season and finishing with a Sunday best of 2-2 he claimed section silver. There were three heat wins for Todd backed up with three seconds and all but for a race two DNS the overall win and not third could have been his. Jay Lamb with a best of third in heat two made it into fourth overall as Jack Carpenter and Yamaha mounted Corie Southwood rounded out the top six in style.

SERIES STANDINGS!

65

1 Lewis Hall 603, 2 Curtis Trimble 536, 3 Jack Galvin 509, 4 Joel Rizzi 494, 5 Drew Kemp 480

SW85

1 Harry Kimber 558, 2 Jed Etchells 555, 3 Nathan Claughton 551, 4 Dylan Woodcock 543, 5 Callum Green 484

BW85

1 Jay Hague 580, 2 Albie Wilkie 541, 3 David Galvin 529, 4 James Mc Fayden 521, 5 Joele Hart 470

YOUTH OPEN

1 Jack Kelly 589, 2 Brad Todd 566, 3 John Adamson 531, 4 Jay Lamb 508, 5 Joe Hodgson 433



Jay Hague's been amazing all year

SPOTLIGHT ON... **JAY HAGUE #77**

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Headling into round three at Culham, Big Wheel 85cc star Jay Hague leads the way in the Red Bull championship. Jay is also brilliantly topping the pile in the Wulfsport British Masters too and also in the ACU British Youth Nationals series. Showing exceptional speed, skill and determination right from the very get go Brad Anderson reckons "the boy's on fire". Brad also reckons given another couple of seasons Jay will be the next big thing hitting the pro ranks. Winning 28 times from 39 starts across three National series to date in 2013 is without doubt something really special.

But following a serious accident which curtailed the 2012 season there was brief consideration for Jay to quit the sport. Suffering serious kidney damage parents Steven and Joanne thought the question needed to be asked. Jay was having none of it however and with an even more determined, gutsy and fully focused outlook the hard work of last winter is now paying real dividends.

The year began with Jay fully paid up and expecting to compete at the Dutch ONK and UEM championships but following a rule change on European competition age ranges 2013 has now become a full on blitz on home turf.

Rage: Although you've been a front runner in the last few years nobody expected you to be this dominant. What has changed?

JH: "Following my accident and kidney damage last year I'm now even more focused on my total fitness. Two or three times a week I go to the

Spartan Performance Gym local to me and I work hard on building up my core strength. I really notice the extra stamina, particularly towards the end of races.

"We have a full time mechanic working with us at weekends (Jason Knight – 7T Racing) and with some engine help from Joe Tavares at EHR Racing France it's taken the bike prep pressure off my dad. And then there is my new trainer Richard-Mike Jones – he has made a real difference."

Rage: Tell me something about your training days with Richard-Mike Jones (RMJ Academy) and Brad Anderson – what do they provide?

JH: "They provide different things really. Brad has been helping out when ever he can for a few years now. He's always calling me on if we are at the same meets and at other times he's on the phone asking how I'm doing. Brad's a massive influence and inspiration confidence wise and as a result of being around him I'm learning to be tougher and more aggressive – but in a positive way.

"Training with Richie has opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking and how I need to structure my whole approach to MX. It's about a lot more than just racing and training – it's a complete mindset that needs to be right even down to extra little things like diet. I now think about every aspect of what I'm doing and focus totally. Training days with RMJ with the likes of Adam Sterry and Matt Moffat also there are just brilliant."

Rage: Competing in Europe should have been a great experience this year. Do you hope to go 125cc racing in Europe next year?

JH: "I have to say it's all a bit undecided at the moment. It depends on a few factors really including any extra sponsorship I can get on the back of this season. Also I might go 250F. If we hadn't have signed up for the 85s in Europe this year and already bought KTMs I might even have gone 150F this year – I know RMJ thinks my style is spot on for a four-stroke. To get a feel of the opposition next year we might try a few of the nearer events like Holland and Belgium."

Rage: Watching from the sidelines Rage asked how things are for parents Steve and Joanne?

Joanne H: "I'm just so proud of Jay. After the horrible accident he's worked his blooming socks off to get where he is right now. It's not easy with all the travelling and expense – his school will only allow 10 days off for MX and it's become a real family effort on race weekends. Jay had a chance to turn his talent towards football – trust him to pick the expensive option."

Steve H: "With a mechanic now looking after the bike prep it's a lot easier on me and I can enjoy the racing more. Back in March we entered the Wulfsport Masters basically just to test our speed but with Jay winning all four races and one of them from dead last it was obvious back then we were bang on the pace. I think the run from the back at Preston Docks was Jay's standout performance of the year so far. I know a lot of experienced racers watching could hardly believe what they were seeing."

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KICK-ASS!

ROB DAVIDSON WRAPS UP THE MXY2 SERIES IN DESERTMARTIN...

The Maxxis MXY2 championship opened up with a diabolical mudder at FatCat and it was another dose of pretty much the same as the series came to a nail biting conclusion at Desertmartin.

Going into the event, series leader Rob Davidson on the MJW Kick Kawasaki, Brad Todd, Ben Putnam, Matthew Callaghan and Scotland's John Adamson all had a shot at the title. At the close of play Irish eye's were definitely smiling as Glenn McCormick went 3-1 to take the overall win. Following his good showing at the previous round it came as little surprise to see McCormick put it across the title contenders on home turf. McCormick with Adamson, Todd and Davidson going before him making it a different winner at every round.

Matthew Callaghan set the pace in qualification but it was Brad Todd who claimed the winning spoils in the days opening moto. Callaghan took second with Davidson down in fifth, Ben Putnam sixth and Adamson in ninth. In terms of the title race Todd now had a two point advantage over Davidson.

In the series decider Davidson makes a good start with Todd coming through the pack. By lap four Davidson held second with Todd in fourth and the battle seemingly on. At this point however lady luck decides to intervene and with his front sprocket going walk about Todd unluckily bails out. Davidson goes on to

finish in second taking the crown as McCormick takes the race win. Callaghan came home in third to lift him into the series runners-up position.

"I knew I had to pull something special out of the bag in the last race no matter what," says the freshly crowned champ. "I got a really good start and entered turn one in third place and then pushed hard to try and get through to the front of the pack and eventually managed it. I managed to bridge a bit of a gap and then got a board to say Brad Todd had a bike problem. This played in my favour and I could ease off a little and not risk doing anything stupid. I rode a solid race to the end and I'm over the moon to have won the British Championship.

"I'm really happy with my day in Ireland and I'm looking forward to moving into the big class in 2014. I still have the Red Bull series to focus on for the rest of the year and my aim is to go well there also. A massive thank you must go to everyone who has helped me get this far and take this championship – hopefully I can work with the same people over the next few years."

SERIES STANDINGS!

MAXXIS MXY2

1 Rob Davidson 139, 2 Matthew Callaghan 126, 3 Ben Putnam 120, 4 Brad Todd 119, 5 John Adamson 113



MEWSE NEWS!

CATCHING UP WITH CONRAD...

Without doubt he's wonderfully talented and is for sure the shining light currently coming through the youth ranks. But with 14-year-old Brit Conrad Mewse operating for the second season solely in Europe just how has he been getting on? Well, brilliant just about sums it up perfectly as Conrad tops the Dutch ONK standings with one round to go and has already booked his place for the Matterley EMX-85 finals in August. Also on the travel agenda before the conclusion of both series is a trip to Jinin in the Czech Republic for the World Youth finals in August.

In the Dutch ONK series Conrad scored two second place finishes at the penultimate Markelo round. Previous to this Conrad had won all heats on the spin to completely dominate the series. In his North West European qualifying zone he has been up against pretty much the same opposition and it's been a similar tale of Mewse supremacy. In four rounds completed only once has Conrad been bettered.

The tough qualifying campaign began in April at Herde with a pair of resounding wins where Spanish wonder kid Jorge Prado Garcia took second overall. The long trip to Finland next resulted in another winning brace. In Denmark came the only Mewse defeat with Conrad going 1-3 after suffering a bad start in the Sunday rain lashed second moto. Garcia nailed the overall in Denmark going 2-1 but next up at the famous old track at Bilstein in Germany Conrad put in his best show of the year. After winning the opening heat he had to overhaul Garcia from a distant 15th place in heat two and all this with an out of sorts machine.

Exiting Germany with another 1-1 in his pocket the even better news was it meant no long trip to Denmark for the fifth qualifier as Conrad was in with room to spare for the Matterley shoot out. With all the Euro zones coming together it's going to be mega. For Conrad as soon as the 85cc season concludes with the ONK finale it's straight on to a 125 and the planning for his next Euro season begins.



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GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

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TEST FEST!

Ed Bradley travels to Germany to test the new KX-Fs while Godfrey J takes the Beta enduro models for a spin. We'll also catch up with the Team Green youth team, Dave Thorpe talks about his brand-new venture and we'll also fill you in on why this year's British GP is a must-see event!

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